



**West/Central Area Committee
(City Councillors representing Castle,
Market and Newnham Wards)
7 February 2008 7.30pm – 9.50pm
Minutes & Actions**

Present: Councillors: Simon Kightley (Chair), Marie-Louise Holland, Tania Zmura (Castle Ward), Colin Rosenstiel, Joye Rosenstiel, Mike Dixon (Market Ward), Julie Smith, Sian Reid (Newnham Ward)

County Councillor: David White (Castle Ward)

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08/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from City Councillor Rod Cantrill (Newnham Ward)

08/02 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2007 were corrected so that the response to question 6 (Agenda Item 07/51: Open Forum) read:
(correction underlined)

Councillor Smith: Noted the request for a meeting with FOMC but had no record of receiving this. After the last event a full debriefing was held and Ward Councillors met to discuss any concerns. Subsequent meetings were then held with the Strawberry Fair Committee and Council Officers and it was agreed that approval for the 2008 event would only be given if certain conditions were met. A change of programming has been suggested making it a more interactive event with street theatre and art therefore changing the nature of the event. It has been noted that if this new approach did not work the future of the event would have to be reconsidered.

The end of time of the meeting was also corrected on page 16 to read: 10.40pm

The Minutes would be signed by the Chair when the amendments had been made.

08/03 MATTERS ARISING

None raised

08/04 Open Forum

The Chair introduced Graham Hughes (Director of Sustainable Infrastructure, Cambridgeshire County Council) who presented on the County Council Transport Strategy (TIF). Apologies were given for Councillor Roy Pegram (Deputy Leader, Cambridgeshire County Council) who was also due to present.

The scale, reasons and benefits of growth around Cambridge were highlighted in detail.

Key transport challenges such as increase in morning peak trips, increase in journey times and accidents, delays at major junctions and increase in pollution and CO2 emissions were noted.

The principles for public transport were noted as:

- Better quality
- Better environmentally
- More reliable
- More frequent

Cambridgeshire had bid for £500 million through the Government's Transport Innovation Fund (£200 million available per annum between 2008/09 and 2014/15 across the country) and in order to qualify, demand management must be an element.

Suggested improvements to rail, cycling and walking systems were highlighted.

Congestion charging could include:

- One off charge for anyone driving into, out of, or within Cambridge
- Time period of 7.30am – 9.30am (Monday-Friday)
- Level of charge set at £3 - £5 per day

It was stated that the proposed strategy could achieve a reduction in morning traffic by 10%, a 16% reduction in CO2 emissions, overall reduction in journey time of 19%, a reduction in journey distances (within the City boundary) by 12% and an increase in the number of people coming into the City of 13%.

The consultation would continue, the results would be analysed and a response regarding the funding would come from the Department for Transport in due course.

Questions were then invited from the Committee and members of the public

Q1) Good alternatives are needed in order for the charging system to actually lower car use. Money is desperately needed to improve and link cycle routes in the City as it is simply too dangerous to use with small children.

In most cases people need to use their cars at morning peak times to get to work - this cost will get passed onto the employers.

A) GH: Improvements to the cycling routes on its own will not solve the problem – a disincentive is needed to get people out of their cars.

Q2) Cambridge is competing with a number of other authorities for the Government funding - what is 'Plan B' if the Council is not successful and will the proposed growth suffer?

A) Councillor Reid: The County Council should have put in a plan to deal with the level of growth agreed in 2003 and which is now being implemented but no clear transport plan has emerged. . Transport and Growth strategies at national level are also not linked and this has added to the problem. If the transport infrastructure is not in place, large developments such as Cambridge East cannot proceed.

GH: Unfortunately there is no 'Plan B' – the current Government regime does not provide the sufficient funding to improve the infrastructure. The Council is currently given £10 million per annum and this is simply not enough. However growth will happen, one way or another, and it would be complacent not to plan for it.

Q3) Is this really a fair consultation or has the outcome already been decided?

A) GH: The consultation is ongoing and as many responses as possible are encouraged. The County Council had to establish some initial proposals in order to put the bid in, but if agreed, further consultation will take place to finalise the details.

Q4) With the current overcrowding in Cambridge a brake in the growth agenda will be a good thing.

A) Councillor Reid: The City Council is currently resisting the Regional Strategy's proposed incremental levels of growth and Governments eco-town B

Q4) Transport is vital and if it is not in place growth should not go ahead – Arbury Park is a good example.

A) Councillor Reid: Arbury Park was done by South Cambridgeshire District Council and its urban planning has been disastrous. The City Council have a good Urban Design Team in order to set much higher standards within the City Council area.

Q5) A good Park and Ride System is in place but there is no long-term strategy to deal with the lack of infrastructure.

A) Councillor Kightley: The missing links are Park and Rides to serve the Huntingdon Road and Barton Road. The problem also goes back to the construction of the A14 with many junctions not designed with the City in mind.

GH: 1.6 million people currently use Park and Ride per annum and the County Council is aiming for two more services to cover the Huntingdon Road area.

Q6) Barton Road would also benefit from a Park and Cycle service and encourage people out of cars.

A) GH: It is easy to look at ideal solutions – but these things need to be funded.

Q7) Long term there is a need to reduce carbon emissions and the County Council should be concerned that there is no 'Plan B' to address congestion. The Council is bidding for one third of the Governments *total* funding and it is unlikely that this will go just to Cambridge.

A) GH: Noted

Q8) A number of issues raised:

- **Lots of alternate options must have been looked at but why are none of these mentioned on the website?**
- **What is the total subsidy for public transport in the county?**
- **If we are lining the pockets of bus and train companies why are we getting no control in return?**
- **In order to integrate the transport schemes in the City we need to adopt things such as bikes on buses etc**

A) GH: Other options were looked at in detail such as per km charging and different zoning but these did not have the same impact. On the website the County Council has only noted the preferred option – as it was felt that this was the important starting point.

The subsidy figures were provided by GH on 13.02.08 and requested that they be added to the minutes:

- *£3,252,374 is the expected spend on contracted bus services this year in the County*

GH: If the costs for using the infrastructure are passed onto Bus and Train companies this would simply be passed onto customers.

Q9) People already travel before 7.30am and the congestion charge will simply move the peak time, and the problems, to an earlier slot.

A) The County Council feel there will be a 'peak spreading' and not a wholesale switch to one particular time.

Q10) No studies or modelling have been done on problem or gridlock areas – how will these be affected by the changes?

A) GH: Modelling is only one of the tools that the County Council used to see what may happen – and it was based on ‘average’ traffic and not worse case scenarios. However if nothing is done, the current problem areas will simply worsen.

Q 11) In other areas the removal of street furniture has resulted in a reduction in accidents – are there any plans for Cambridge?

A) GH: The County Council are aware of and will look at the outcome of trials of this elsewhere in the country.

Q 12) What about the moral aspect - poorer people are being priced off the roads. Congestion has been created by the planners:

- **Closure of three river crossings**
- **Issues with Waitrose**
- **Newmarket Road shopping area**
- **Increase in traffic lights**

A) Councillor Reid: Poor people would benefit greatly from improved public transport; the Council places high value on providing alternative transport for all sections of the community.

Q13) How will the proposed system work?

A) GH: An automated system is proposed using a series of detectors around the City. A ‘Tag and Beacon’ system has been considered where credit can be added to a vehicle tag and automatically debited when a beacon is passed. A number plate recognition system will also be used.

Q14) Councillor Newbold stated at the last South Area Committee that the Labour Group would not charge residents – whilst the Liberal Democrats would support discounts for residents.

A) Councillor Reid: The TiF guidance from the Labour Government states that it would not entertain the idea of residents’ discounts.

Councillor Smith: supported the need to reduce CO2 emissions, improve public transport and provide a residents' discount.

GH: The County Council is well aware of the need to work with the City Council to address the issue of residents' discounts. However congestion is congestion and a reduction in cost for residents will mean a big increase in cost for others.

08/05 Declaration of Interest

None raised

08/06 West/Central Area Neighbourhood Policing

Apologies were given for Inspector Jon Hutchinson.

Neighbourhood Policing Sergeant Ted Hawkins introduced this item and gave a brief update on each Ward:

Newnham

- Crime figures were the lowest in the City
- The emergence of vehicle crime series around Grange Road, with commuters the main victim

Castle

- Crime figures down 46% on previous period
- A few burglaries reported in Carisbrooke Road and Windsor Road Area (linked to 2 charged offenders)

Market

- Crime figures down 15%
- Shoplifting Squad highly successful
- 49 Reports of problems from Streetlife
- Cycles without lights: Over 200 tickets issued
- Parking in cycle lanes: 31 warning letters sent out

The Police Team consists of:

1 x Sergeant
5 x Neighbourhood Constables
2 x Streetlife Officers
8 x PCSO's
Reactive Teams
Special Constables
CID Officers

It was suggested that all previous priorities (noted below) remain to enable action plans to be implemented:

- *Shed burglaries in Castle*
- *Crime and ASB on Lammas Land*
- *Violent Crime associated with Night Time Economy*

It was noted that the emergence of vehicle crime in Newnham would also be monitored.

Questions were then invited from the Committee and members of the public.

Q1) Why are the Police Surgeries no longer running in Michael House on the 1st Wednesday of the Month?

A) Agreed to take this away and look into the issue.

Q2) Cyclists jumping red lights is a big issue and proving very dangerous – are the police actively ticketing?

A) Three tickets were issued today in Gough Way for this offence and five issued for no lights. The corner of Silver Street has also been targeted and all local colleges have been informed of the dangers for their students.

Q3) Lead theft was a continuing issue in the Castle area – have there been any convictions?

A) An arrest has been made as a result of theft from Churchill College and the scrap yard on Newmarket Road is visited daily by the police.

Q4) Elizabeth Way roundabout is a concern with bikes and cars frequently jumping the red lights.

A) This is a concern and within Cambridge it was noted that cyclists are by far the biggest traffic offenders.

Q5) Did the Council or the Police make the decision not to lock the gate at Lammas Land if cars are still on site? Could it not be locked at a certain time regardless of this?

A) The aim is to lock the gate from 8pm every evening to stop anti social behaviour, however this was depending on available police personnel. It is something the police will look into again.

Q6) A member of the public emailed the Committee to raise the issue of cyclists riding on pavements and the proposed action of the police to address this.

A) The police are actively tackling this by verbally warning cyclists and also issuing tickets. All university students are reminded at the beginning of each term and we are also using the media to get the message across.

Members of the Area Committee agreed that all previous priorities, with the addition of vehicle crime in Newnham, remain to enable action plans to be implemented.

08/07 Dates of the meetings for 2008-09

The next meeting of West/Central Area Committee will take place on 3 April 2008 at Cripps Court, 1-3 Chesterton Road, CB4 3AD.

Revised further dates for 2008/09 were suggested and would be agreed by all members at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.50pm.

Chair