

WEST CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE

26 November 2020
6.30 - 8.55 pm

Present

Area Committee Members: Councillors Matthews (Chair), Porrer (Vice-Chair), Bick, Chadwick, Gehring, Martinelli, Nethsingha and Richards

Officers:

Head of Streets and Open Spaces: Joel Carré
Community Development Officer: Vicky Haywood
Anti-Social Behaviour Officer: Sarah Steggles
Committee Manager: Thomas Mears

Other Officers in Attendance:

Police Sergeant: Kevin Mišák
Greater Cambridge Partnership: Grant Weller and Richard Preston

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

20/21/WAC Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Harrison, Hipkin and Payne.

20/22/WAC Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

20/23/WAC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

20/24/WAC Matters and Actions Arising From the Minutes

Councillor Martinelli updated the Committee on cycle theft from the central train station cycle park. Greater Anglia have submitted a revised management plan for tackling cycle crime to the City Council, and Officers are currently working on a response to the revised plan. The Committee agreed to keep this action under review.

At the end of the meeting, Councillor Martinelli provided a brief verbal update to the Committee regarding the Cycle Management Plan report that had been received during the meeting.

Councillor Chadwick provided an update to the Committee on the Castle Mound right of way. Suffolk County Council have voted in favour to make an Order for the right of way up Castle Mound. An Order will be published which will give an opportunity for public comment or objections. Provided this process is successful, the right of way will appear on the Ordinance Survey Map. Councillor Richards added that interested parties were waiting to hear from the town greens. The Committee agreed to keep this action under review.

Councillor Payne provided a written update to the travellers on the McManus Estate, summarised by Councillor Matthews. The landowner decided to relinquish the land, and the City Council were seeking legal guidance on taking the land into Council ownership. Two of the three caravans have moved on. The Crown Court have agreed not to exercise any rights they have to ownership of the land, which means the City Council is now able to begin enforcement proceedings and will issue a notice to ask the remaining caravan to leave. Residents have raised concerns about hygiene around the site from littering and the risk to the school parents who need to use that space to queue while maintaining social distancing.

Councillor Scutt added that the City Council has also made clear that it is intending to enter into discussions with South Cambridgeshire District Council to ensure the travellers will have a space that they can use. The City Council recognise the importance of ensuring that the travellers have a space they can legitimately occupy. The Committee noted to keep this action under review.

Councillor Matthews provided an update to air pollution on Histon Road. It was noted that there are high levels of monitoring of NO₂ and particulates across the city compared to similar areas around the country. Although there is no monitoring on Histon Road, in other areas of the city where emissions are higher, the levels of particulates are within the legal levels. The Officers are reasonably satisfied that there is a good level of monitoring across the city. Councillor Matthews had also been informed that the resident who raised this issue at the last committee meeting brought this item to North Area Committee last week and did not have further questions on the item. The Committee agreed to remove this item as an action.

No further complaints had been received regarding parking and parking enforcement on East Road and the Committee agreed to remove this item as an action.

20/25/WAC Open Forum

No questions were received from members of the public under the Open Forum.

20/26/WAC Policing and Safer Neighbourhoods

Police Sergeant Mišík highlighted the police activity since the Committee last met in September.

A member of the public asked a question about an increase in begging around the Histon Road shopping parade area and if the police were aware of this?

PS Mišík reported that the City Council had funded accommodation in Master's House on Histon Road as part of its response to the Covid-19 crisis to provide accommodation to people in need of housing. There has been an increase in the people engaging in begging in the area. The police are aware of the issue and are in regular contact with the onsite security company and the Council's housing department.

Citing reports from residents of a lockdown party that took place in an Airbnb property on City Road last week, Councillor Martinelli asked how often lockdown parties are reported and the reasons why in such instances the police would not be able to attend?

PS Mišík believed the police were not able to attend the mentioned incident when it occurred as they were busy that evening. However, PS Mišík confirmed that they were able to speak with those involved soon after the event. PS Mišík did not believe that lockdown parties were a regular occurrence in the city.

Councillor Bick thanked PS Mišík for engaging with the King Street and Willow Walk police priority. Councillor Bick asked whether there could be further coordination between the police and the hostel management at Willow Walk prior to an eviction taking place to ensure that this would happen smoothly?

PS Mišík acknowledged there could be a coordinated approach towards tenant evictions from hostels and this could be achieved through improving communication between the police and the hostels and through exploring the use of community protections orders. The police are in regular communication with several hostel providers in the city that attend the fortnightly meeting of the Streetlife Working Group.

Councillor Bick asked whether PS Mišík could provide details on the plans for managing the city centre night time economy under the new tier system due to be introduced?

PS Mišík highlighted several ways the police are preparing to manage the city centre's night time economy under the new tier system including:

- PS Mišík attends a weekly meeting chaired by the Head of Streets and Open Spaces where ongoing issues are discussed.
- PS Mišík's team's deployment plan for December has been finalized.
- A weekly police tactics meeting is held to discuss ongoing issues across the southern district. The Senior Leadership Team pick the priorities for the following week to allow for resourcing from various teams across the city against those priorities. It is likely that the night time economy will be one of those priorities.
- The police are working in partnership with the City Council's Covid Marshalls and Cambac radios.

Councillor Nethsingha asked for feedback on how to mitigate an increase of vehicles delivering goods to homes that cause obstructions to pavements and cycle lanes.

PS Mišík advised to contact the delivery company to address the issue where this is possible.

Councillor Nethsingha followed up by asking if there is capacity to use cameras similarly to the operation of bus lane cameras?

PS Mišík would explore if this is a possibility and will report back.

Action point: Councillor Nethsingha and PS Mišík

Councillor Gehring asked if the night time economy could be replaced by cycle theft as a police priority?

PS Mišík stated that the night time economy posed a significant risk and required policing. PS Mišík also confirmed that cycle crime is policed, and work is ongoing with partners in the background to tackle cycle theft. It was confirmed that bikes are being seized, but highlighted difficulties around returning the bikes to their owners as they are often not reported to the police as stolen, or the frame numbers are not known by the owners.

Councillor Gehring raised concerns of the rise of vigilante groups in retaliation to cycle theft which PS Mišík acknowledged was also a concern for the police.

Action point: PS Mišík to feedback progress of tackling cycle crime at the next Committee meeting.

A member of the public raised the following issue:

Overall solution for Amazon style delivery vans in local areas is to reduce parking in these areas and make some space for deliveries.

Tesco was suggested as a good practice example. This is not the case. Please can the police deal with this location? *(The member of the public shared a Twitter link of Tesco Express on East Road).*

Bus lane cameras - the government is working to enable this - may already be possible. Camcycle may have expert knowledge - please do contact them.

The Committee agreed to maintain the following priorities:

- Anti-social behaviour in King Street/Willow Walk
- Anti-social behaviour in open and green spaces
- Night time economy/alcohol related disorder

20/27/WAC City Centre Recovery

The Head of Environmental Services gave an information update on the City Centre Recovery.

Councillor Bick asked:

Given the current circumstances and how a-boards can force people together should the right to permit a-boards outside shops on pavements be revoked?

The Head of Streets and Open Spaces said the City Council approved a policy that allowed one a-board per premises to be placed on the pavement within certain parameters. It was confirmed that a-boards had not been highlighted as a risk in its Covid-19 risk assessment, provided they had been placed on the pavement in line with the guidance. The right will not be revoked at this time, however, if an a-board is identified as an issue, then action would be taken to resolve this by talking with the business owner on where best to place the a-board with the potential of removing it if required.

With regards to the Market Square redevelopment, does one of the objectives still include a use for the Market Square at night time?

The Head of Streets and Open Spaces confirmed that the Market Square concept design is considering how to maximise the space, including a 7 day a week market with day and night uses.

If the consultation on the King's Parade barrier will take into consideration the location of the barrier?

The Head of Streets and Open Spaces said the consultation is only looking at the legal basis for the barrier and seeking views of the design of the current barrier. Moving the barrier would have implications on the wider traffic network and further planning is required before a decision can be made on the barrier's design and location.

1. A member of the public raised the following issue:

The King's Parade barrier is quite ugly. Can these be redesigned, to look nicer, to allow the cycle gap to be two-way, to reinstate the disabled parking and ideally deliveries. Adding cycle parking would be very sensible also.

The Head of Streets and Open Spaces thanked the member of the public for the questions and comments and asked them to feed their comments into the consultation.

2. A member of the public raised the following issue:

Good to hear encouragement of outdoor seating for cafes etc. Can you undertake to encourage Mill Road traders to do this also? The street is much more pleasant now without the traffic going through, and in many parts of the street there is now space to cone off parts of the road to have outdoor seating, as was done successfully last year near Limoncello in Romsey.

The Head of Street and Open Spaces commented that the Council is currently focused on the city centre recovery and will support other shopping areas once measures are in place for the city centre. The Head of Street and Open Spaces added that the Mill Road trading community could start to develop their own plans and gather support for future development of the area.

Councillor Gehring asked if there would be a full design competition for the King's Parade barrier and if the consultation could commence in January?

The Head of Street and Open Spaces confirmed that due to time constraints, the consultation will look at the legal basis of the barrier, however added the current barrier is still considered to be a temporary structure and a permanent design scheme with consultation is planned for the future.

20/28/WAC Mutual Aid activity

The Community Development Officer provided a briefing on Mutual Aid activity in Cambridge in response to Covid-19. The Committee thanked the officers for the work they had done to support the community since March and noted the following:

Councillor Porrer gave thanks to all the residents and officers for the work that went in to setting up the mutual aid groups, for maintaining those groups and for re-forming the hub again for the second lockdown. Councillor Porrer also reminded those participating in or watching the meeting to refer residents in need to the mutual aid groups and the Cambridge City Council Community Hub (details provided on Cambridge City Council's website). Additionally, donations are welcome at the food banks in the city for unwanted food items.

With reference to free school meals, it is understood that Central Government and the County Council have come to the conclusion that the voucher system should continue as in the past which now obviates the need for the hubs to provide that service, however Councillor Scutt gave thanks for the fact that the hubs were ready to step in to provide that service.

20/29/WAC Walking and cycling consultation and proposals

Richard Preston from the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) provided an update on the Silver Street bus gate scheme.

Councillor Bick asked about the progress of other similar schemes that had previously been proposed.

It was confirmed to the Committee that there are six schemes currently under review. Those schemes were deferred as some stakeholders raised concerns about them during the initial engagement. Following further engagement with those stakeholders and County Councillors, feedback will be provided to the GCP Board for a decision on the future of those schemes.

The GCP is also waiting for the County Council to indicate its expectations on public consultation. In releasing the second round of funding for these measures, Central Government has expressed an expectation for more public consultation prior to the implementation of any scheme.

On the Silver Street scheme, Councillor Nethsingha expressed the need for further consultation on the scheme before a final decision is made on the permanence of the scheme as the traffic flows are not a true representation pre-Covid.

The GCP has been inviting comments throughout the scheme's trial and during the previous formal consultation process and expect that a final opportunity for feedback from stakeholders and members will be given before any recommendations are presented to the GCP Board.

Councillor Scutt commented that each scheme seemed to be taken in isolation, however it is important to note the impact of a scheme not just on the immediate area where it is situated but also on the wider area of the city.

It was confirmed that the GCP is working closely with County Council Officers to align the projects and to take a practical assessment of how the schemes operate together.

Grant Weller joined the meeting and gave an update to the Greenways project.

Councillor Gehring asked whether the Greenways project on Grantchester Road would be located inside the line or outside the line of the hedge?

Councillor Nethsingha believed the route of the cycle path would place it inside the line of the hedge, although there are discussions still ongoing on this scheme and the Barton Greenways scheme regarding how the routes would safely join the road when they enter Newnham Ward.

Councillor Gehring also asked Officers at the GCP to consult relevant City Council Ward members in addition to County Councillor Division members.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

CHAIR