

NORTH AREA COMMITTEE

2 September 2021
6.30 - 8.45 pm

Present

Area Committee Members: Councillors Bird, Bond, Collis, Dalzell, Gawthrope Wood, McQueen, Sargeant, Scutt, Sheil, Smart, Todd-Jones, Bird and Condron

Officers:

Committee Manager: Sarah Steed
Meeting Producer: Liam Martin

Others in Attendance:

Donal Trimble (GCP Project Manager)
Patrick Joyce (Cambridgeshire County Council)
Paul Van de Bulk (GCP Project Manager)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

21/17/NAC Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from County Councillor Meschini, Councillor Smart provided apologies for lateness.

21/18/NAC Declarations Of Interest

No interests were declared

21/19/NAC Minutes

The notes of the meetings held on 10 June 2021 were noted.

21/20/NAC Open Forum

1. The Chair of the Histon Road Residents Association (HRARA) advised the committee about the publication of their book which was about their childhood wartime experiences and everyday life in the area. The HRARA thanked North Area Committee and West Central Area Committee for approving their community grant which provided financial assistance towards the production of their book.

Exhibitions for the book launch were taking place at St Augustine's Community Centre on:

- Friday 24 September 3-5pm
- Saturday 25 September 10am – 5pm
- Sunday 26 September 11am – 5pm

Councillor Scutt congratulated the residents' association on producing the book and advised that she had been provided with a copy of the book to give to the Chair of North Area Committee. She encouraged members to read the book as it was a very interesting collection of memories from local people in the area.

2. A member of the public asked about volunteering opportunities specifically in the north of the city. Officers had advised them about contacting Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service. [Home - Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service \(cambridgecvs.org.uk\)](http://cambridgecvs.org.uk).

Councillor Cox Condron suggested that a volunteer's fair could be held in Milton Road Library.

Councillor McQueen advised that there were a number of community organisations and youth groups in the north area wards although some may require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Would be happy to provide further details.

Councillor Collis noted that there was a Fairbite shop in the north of Cambridge which was run by the Food Bank and there was about to be a second in Chesterton at Hope Church. [Fairbite — Cambridge Sustainable Food](#).

Councillor Gawthrope Wood advised that in the past the Council had run a volunteer fair. Also suggested the Red Hen project, which would require a DBS check.

3. The website of This Land Ltd indicated that the Milton Road Library building had been sold.

- a. Asked if the county councillors could confirm this and if they were they aware that the sale had actually gone ahead.

- b. Asked if any discussions had taken place with This Land Ltd in order to postpone the sale as requested by the local community.
- c. Asked if the sale was confirmed whether they could be told who the new owners were.
- d. Asked if the county council Joint Administration would be making a public statement about this.

Councillor Cox Condron noted that this had been a priority for the new joint administration at the County Council and had been provided with the following responses from officers:

- i. The proposed disposal of Milton Road Library by This Land Ltd was included in the business plan in April 2020. In the likely sale of the freehold, it was requested that the lease was extended. Negotiations had agreed the lease would be for an additional 20 years with the option to renew for a further 15 years, therefore the lease could be in existence up to 2079, subject to contract.
- ii. A detailed response was provided by the Chief Finance Officer in July 2021 at the County Council's Strategy and Resources Committee in response to questions put to that committee. Whilst Cambridgeshire County Council was a 100% shareholder of This Land Ltd, it did not have a straight forward power to instruct This Land Ltd in respect of the transaction. There was a separation in law between directors and shareholders.
- iii. Sale negotiations were still taking place. Details of the new owners was commercially sensitive information.
- iv. Councillor Cox Condron and Councillor Sanderson would meet with residents at the library as soon as they were able to, to give them an update.

Councillor Scutt said that when she was a County Councillor she was constantly raising questions about This Land Ltd and had continued to do so even when she was no longer a county councillor.

Councillor Sargeant commented that the reference to the library being sold should be removed from This Land Ltd's website if this was not the case.

Councillor Dalzell shared members frustrations regarding This Land Ltd and encouraged the scrutiny of the county council's position regarding their powers in relation to This Land Ltd. The Articles of Association for This Land Ltd allowed shareholders by special resolution to direct the directors to take or refrain from taking specified action. The County Council was 100% shareholder of this Land Ltd; action could be taken.

Councillor Gawthrop Wood supported further scrutiny of this issue.

Councillor Cox Condron advised that legal advice had been taken on this matter. She re-read the officer response 'sales negotiations were reportedly on-going and commercially sensitive, if the sale of the property was completed then details of the new owners would be publicly available from the Land Registry. This Land Ltd could publicise this information if they wished to do so'.

Councillor Scutt commented that the County Council should be advised to seek independent legal advice on this matter.

Action: Concluding the discussion on This Land and Milton Road Library, there was general agreement that the Chair and Vice Chair would take up the question with the County Council in writing.

21/21/NAC Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Fen Road update on the schedule of works

The Committee received a verbal update on the Fen Road Chisholm Trail project.

The update outlined:

- i. The project had had some key milestones over the last 9 months, including the safe delivery of the underpass on Newmarket Road.
- ii. The Common project was to be completed in the next 3-4 weeks.
- iii. The programme would then move on to Fen Road and where pedestrians and cyclists would leave the new Chisholm Trail. A safety critical area had been identified, where visibility lines would be challenging coming on to Fen Road. Experts had been consulted to make this area as safe as was possible.
- iv. Consultations with councillors had taken place.
- v. It was hoped the entire project could be completed by the end of the year.
- vi. The design of the crossing sought to ensure full visibility of pedestrians and cyclists on Fen Road.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Expressed concerns about the way people would leave the Chisholm Trail and come on to Fen Road. Would have liked to have seen a traffic light / crossing light but was aware of the costs of this. Asked for a review of the crossing 3 - 4 months after the crossing was opened.

- ii. Was grateful to the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) for delivering this project but noted that there was a bigger problem at this area. Would like to have seen a crossing but noted the advice from officers. Asked to see the post road opening safety audit data as this might provide evidence for other issues further along Fen Road. Asked to see the detailed specification for the crossing.
- iii. Felt that not all of Cambridgeshire observed the road hierarchy particularly on Fen Road.
- iv. Hoped there would be barriers around the chicanes to prevent drivers driving over the raised part of the chicanes.
- v. Asked if there would be a give way sign.
- vi. Noted that an alternative proposal had been ignored (vehicle access to East Chesterton end from the north of Milton Road).

The GCP Project Officer said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Costs were only one of the factors against a signalised system. The locality of the rail line was another factor. There were concerns about traffic stacking if a signalised system was put in place. Confirmed a post road opening safety audit would be carried out.
- ii. Physical obstructions at the crossing should deter people from driving at speed. The chicanes also shortened the distance of the crossing making it quicker and safer for people to cross.
- iii. Confirmed there would be robust bollards on the approach to the crossing to ensure vehicles were directed into the correct position.
- iv. Confirmed there would be clear highway signage for all road users.

21/22/NAC Working from Home - Implications for the Environment

Councillor Scutt discussed the environmental implications about working from home. Asked residents to get in touch with her for ideas about what residents themselves could do about reducing their impact on the environment.

21/23/NAC Environmental Report - NAC

Councillors and members of the public were asked to email the Committee Manager or Councillor McQueen with any questions that they had on this report.

Councillor Scutt confirmed that the right of way at Castle Mound had been approved.

Councillor Dalzell noted an increase in fly tipping compared to previous years and asked what steps were being taken to combat this.

Councillor Sheil thanked the Shared Waste Service for a project they had undertaken at Brackley Close.

Councillor Collis as Executive Councillor responded to questions regarding Open Spaces:

- i. Was looking at getting volunteers groups involved in the work to make the city herbicide free.
- ii. Confirmed that fly tipping was at the top of her agenda. Was aware over the summer that officers had been working on the fly tipping issue with particular focus on hot spots at Campkin Road and Arbury Road.

Action: Would discuss with the Head of Environmental Services what measures were being taken to try and reduce fly tipping and would report back to the committee.

21/24/NAC Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) - Update on Histon Road and Milton Road Projects

The Committee received a verbal update regarding Histon Road and Milton Road Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Projects.

The Histon Road update outlined:

- i. For phase A: Footpath surfacing had finally been completed around the Victoria Road junction. Loops had been cut for the signals. They were waiting for the contractor to fully commission the signals on the junction so that it all worked properly.
- ii. For phase B: Resurfacing had been completed up to Gilbert Road and this had been completed. The sub-contractor needed to return (for half a night) to complete remedial work. The road had been open two ways between Gilbert Road and Victoria Road.
- iii. Phase C was the junction at Gilbert Road; two of the islands were virtually complete. A few islands needed to be completed on the south western corner of the junction. Surfacing was planned for the 13 September and was estimated to take 4-5 nights to complete. The junction would then be finished.

- iv. Phase D: Civils work should be finished which would then allow them to move onto the surfacing work between Gilbert Road and Brownlow Road. Hoped this would be completed by the end of September.
- v. There was a slight delay around the works to the Rosewood Road junction as this was where most services converged and BT had experienced problems sourcing a cabinet. Hoped works would be completed by the end of September.
- vi. Had pushed hard for Darwin Green works to be done at the same time as the GCP works but it was likely these would need to be done separately.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Residents had raised concerns about the planting near Akeman Street and the maintenance of trees. It was noted that a tree had died already.
- ii. Expressed concerns regarding the works which had been undertaken near Murketts garage.
- iii. Noted no loading restrictions on Histon Road, asked for a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to introduce loading restrictions on Histon Road.
- iv. Supported 20mph speed limit on Histon Road.

The GCP Project Officer said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Was disappointed that the tree was planted when it was, as it was during the hottest part of the summer. A tree would need to be replanted. A maintenance schedule was in place.
- ii. Confirmed the sub-contractor would be undertaking remedial works to the asphalt laid around Murketts garage.
- iii. Noted at the southern end of Histon Road some residents only had access through the front of their properties so had concerns about taking away their ability to load and unload outside their house. This could be revisited in the future.

Action: Paul Van de Bulk to investigate the issue of enforcement in relation to obstructing pavements on Histon Road and issues of parking on Milton Road and to update Councillors Sargeant, Dalzell and Chair of HRARA.

Members of the public raised the following questions:

1. Bus Services on Histon Road and Victoria Road:
 - a. Referred to Paul Van de Bulk's response to action 21/15/NAC Q2. He stated that 'This was outside of the scope which is delivering infrastructure to allow better bus service.'

- b. The 8H bus was withdrawn from 29 August and the Citi8 bus was to continue via Arbury Road into the city. The following reply was posted on Twitter after HRARA questioned the delay in coming back to Histon Road since the Inbound lane was now opened from Gilbert Road to Victoria Junction. 'The dates were given for the road works to finish. All buses were licensed and unlicensed according to the dates given. Then guess what, Histon Road will not be finished. We have done what needs to be done and a diversion was the only option'.
- c. Stagecoach had added new bus stop signs in the inbound lane showing Citi8 and Guided Bus A stopping at Akeman Street.
- d. HRARA and residents were surprised and suggested that the Citi8 would turn towards Histon Road on Gilbert Road and then the Victoria Junction and Victoria Road which had no inbound service. No response had been provided.
- e. Asked when the road works on Histon Road would be finished so the residents in the area would have public transport available.
- f. In the latest report from GCP dated 25 August it stated that work was continuing in the northern section between Gilbert Junction and Brownlow Road, it was expected that the entire road would be re-opened later this summer." But that was now.
- g. In the same report it said - The last remaining resurfacing works between Gilbert Road junction and Brownlow Road were due to take place in September. Signs on the road stated that there would be closures from 21 September for 13 nights, which would be to around 4 October. It did not say that the road would then be open for bus services.
- h. After the recent rounds of overnight closures, the resurfacing from Brownlow Road to Kings Hedges was now complete. But that is not correct because the resurfacing ends by the city limits. The remaining road works to Kings Hedges Road depended on the Developers of Darwin Green.
- i. HRARA asked the GCP if the road works on the entire Histon Road would be finished by the first week of October and if it would be suitable for Stagecoach to start bus services along the full length of Histon Road to Kings Hedges Road as well as Victoria Road.

The GCP Project Officer (Histon Road and Milton Road) responded:

- i. There was a miscommunication with Stagecoach. They thought that the GCP would be re-opening all of Histon Road and they submitted their licence applications to modify their bus service which they weren't able to

change. The solution round this was to divert buses so that they could still service the route.

The reason that 13 nights for phase D had been applied for was to give them sufficient time to complete the works. It was anticipated that the works would be completed earlier but it was easier to apply for a longer period than expected rather than to try and extend a night closure if you hadn't applied for sufficient time.

Action: Paul Van de Bulk to follow up with Stagecoach to see whether they have been running the diversion route.

2. Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) 20mph Histon Road Southern area, Road Safety and Policing
 - a. HRARA and residents were very happy earlier this year when the temporary 20mph was introduced to safeguard the workforce on the road and people walking or cycling in a very stressful situation traversing between both sides and in-between.
 - b. Some 500 offenders were caught and fined, but the solar panelled equipment was no longer available to monitor the traffic. HRARA requested the local police to arrange speed watch observations along the road. In the spring there was no kit available, repeated requests were made but there had been no action. The Cambridge City Police had started a new communication Group "Working together to understand local issues" and at that meeting the Road Safety issues were a major topic. The Speed Watch kit was also requested from other residents. No reply had been provided as to when this action could be carried out on Histon Road.
 - c. With the temporary 20mph speed limits lifted between Victoria Junction and Gilbert Road Junction when the two-way traffic started on 27 August and the school opening today (2 September) the traffic would increase.
 - d. HRARA asked if and when the GCP officers would proceed with the permanent 20mph speed limit TRO between Akeman Street and Victoria Junction as earlier promised and strongly supported both by the North Area and West-Central Area Committees.

The GCP Project Officer (Histon Road and Milton Road) responded:

- i. Suggested HRARA continued to follow up the issue of the temporary speed camera with the police.
- i. Had emailed the County Council Team who managed TRO processes to try and start a TRO for this issue. Would follow this up.

- ii. Had contacted the County Council's Enforcement Team and asked them to start enforcing the TRO.

The Milton Road update:

- i. Covid had had an impact due to individuals needing to self-isolate.
- ii. Was hoping to go out to tender for the full works package later in September, this would include final designs.
- iii. Was still aiming for a spring 2022 start for the works.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the Milton Road update:

- i. Asked when the next Milton Road Local Liaison Forum would be.
- ii. Asked when consideration would be given to parking restrictions on Milton Road.

The GCP Project Officer said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Asked the Councillor to speak with the GCP Communications Team regarding the Local Liaison Forums.
- ii. Discussions needed to take place regarding parking and the integration with residents parking schemes.

A Member of the public asked the following question:

- 3. The last set of drawings in the public domain known as the Final 2D Design was updated and published in June 2020. When and how will the latest set of drawings be made publicly available?

The GCP Project Officer said the following in response:

- i. The 2D drawings were published on the website and the 3D drawing would be with officers in the next couple of weeks. It would take a little time to review the drawings and they would then need to be taken via the GCP Assembly and GCP Board for approval. Timings were still to be agreed. Would speak with the Communications Team to see whether the drawings could be published earlier.

21/25/NAC Committee Action Sheet

The Action Sheet was noted and an updated copy could be viewed at the following link under 'Committee Action Sheet – updated post committee'.

[Agenda for North Area Committee on Thursday, 2nd September, 2021, 6.30 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

The Chair of the HRARA made the following comment with reference to the action below:

Minute reference: **21/15/NAC Open Forum Q2**

- Action: Councillor Todd-Jones to work with HRARA and Paul Van de Bulk regarding issues raised with the GCP Histon road scheme.
- Lead: Councillor Todd-Jones
- Progress:
 - Updated 10 August 2021: Cllr Todd-Jones liaise with Paul Van de Bulk and the Chair of the HRARA about the issues raised at North Area Committee and Paul and the Chair discussed the issues directly themselves. Issue to be closed.

HRARA has following comments:

- i. Had received an email from Paul van de Bulk on 21 June but they had not met and discussed the issues.
- ii. The pavement width was worse than mentioned in the minutes, 0.90m officially measured. Nothing has been done to improve.
- iii. The width for the buses Akeman to Victoria junction did not allow for two buses to meet, they would have to straddle the cycle lanes. Nothing had improved.
- iv. Reply from Paul van de Bulk regarding the buses - This was outside of the scope of the project which was delivering the infrastructure to allow better bus service.
- v. Regarding Cycle lanes and Bus stops – there had been no improvement. Regarding Signalling system – a new trial has been run recently.
- vi. Reply from Paul van de Bulk regarding 20mph – The project team agreed.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

CHAIR