

WEST CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE15 June 2023
6.30 - 8.40 pm

Present: Councillors Porrer (Chair), Martinelli (Vice-Chair), Bick, Glasberg, Holloway, Payne, S. Smith and Gay

Officers:

Head of Environmental Services: Joel Carre

Harm reduction and Anti-Social Behaviour Manage: Sarah Steggles

Committee Manager and Meeting Producer: Claire Tunnicliffe

Other Officers in Attendance:

Police Sergeant: Kevin Misik

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**23/9/WAC Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Nestor, Nethsingha and Rae.

23/10/WAC Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Glasberg	All	Personal: Member of Cam Cycle and Cambridge Living Streets Group

23/11/WAC Notes from Previous Meeting

The Committee noted the notes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023.

23/12/WAC Matters and Actions Arising

Following a discussion on this agenda item the action sheet has been updated accordingly which can be viewed at the following link:

[Agenda for West Central Area Committee on Thursday, 15th June, 2023, 6.30 pm - Cambridge Council.](#)

This would be the last West Central Area Committee meeting for the Head of Environmental Services who would be leaving the Council in July. The Chair thanked Joel Carre for his support, hard work and ability to provide feedback and evidence with little notice.

Councillor Bick stated that Joel's leaving would not only be a loss to West Central Area Committee but also to Cambridge City Council.

23/13/WAC Policing and Safer Neighbourhoods WCAC

The Committee received a report regarding policing and safer neighbourhoods trends.

The report outlined actions taken since the last reporting period. The current emerging issues/neighbourhood trends for each ward were also highlighted (see report for full details). Previous local areas of concern and engagement activity noted in the report were:

- i. Drug dealing and associated anti-social behaviour, including threatening behaviour and safeguarding of young people;
- ii. Road safety focussing on delivery mopeds and electric scooters illegally used on public highways, particularly those vehicles at night without lights;
- iii. Street begging; and
- iv. Supporting the new (police campaign) expected on drugs with focus on frequent users and the night-time economy.

A member of the public put forward the following questions:

Q1: Recently, a neighbour experienced someone attempting to break into her home late on a Saturday night. She was alone with two young children. Despite being on the phone with the police while the person was attempting to get into her front door and being around the corner from the Parkside Station, there was no attempt made by the police to attend to her house while it was happening, despite it going on for some time. Luckily the attempt was unsuccessful, and the person left without coming inside. The police visited the next day.

When she told her neighbours the next day what had happened, we had one collective question - if a 'live' home invasion is not an immediate priority for the Cambridge police for a call out, what is happening in Cambridge that is more pressing?

Sergeant Misik advised that he had reviewed this case and had spoken with Councillor Bick of the outcome; the nature of the call changed while the member of the public was on the phone. Due to the change, the call handler adjusted the priority as the risk had reduced.

Q2: NB: This is not referring to the motorised mopeds being discussed elsewhere.

Cycling through the centre of Cambridge since the end of Lockdown is now essentially anarchic. There is no more any concept of one way streets and there is widespread cycling on pavements. Although I cycle through it several times a day, I have never seen any police or community patrol engaging in it

Although I'm sure some cyclists are doing it deliberately to save time, I think many simply do not understand which streets are one way

Could the Council please consider some action towards improving this - for example, a day or two where those entering one-way systems the wrong way are actively and publicly stopped; improved signage, etc? (Regarding improved signage, can it please be remembered that not all cyclists, particularly those not from the UK, have taken a UK driving test and may not understand the meaning of UK road signs.)

At a bare minimum, could the painted signs on the ground that show that there is separate 'lanes' for pedestrians and cyclists on the path leading to Garret Hostel Bridge from the Backs be repainted? They are barely visible, and there is a general air of confusion as to where one is supposed to be. This will only get worse as the tourists return in greater numbers.

The Head of Environmental Services respond that enforcement was a Police responsibility, and the County Council would be responsible for signage as the highway authority. Had spoken with the City and County Council Cycling Officer on this matter who had advised of the following.

- i. The highway around Garrett Hostel was too narrow for the effective segregation of pedestrians and those using cycles. This should not have been implemented in the first instance. Therefore, could not support the request for the faded signs to be repainted.

- ii. There had been some improvement to signage undertaken some years back but there could be scope for greater clarity. Without enforcement, signage has limited impact.

Sergeant Misik explained that enforcement was undertaken but could not be at the same location all day every day.

The Committee discussed whether a one-way system was required and if there was an issue with people choosing to cycle doing so both ways. It was noted this was also an environmental issue, witnessed aggressive interaction on a shared space and there should be respect and awareness.

The Committee next discussed the policing and safer neighbourhood report and the frustration that was experienced when reporting a crime / incident that very little or no feedback was received, particularly when reporting a drug related crime and / or associated anti-social behaviour.

Sergeant Misik explained that an outcome was rarely provided back to the individual. Reporting provided the police with a better chance of being in the right place at the right time and provided examples where a positive outcome had been received due to the public / councillor reporting. Agreed to speak with Inspector McNeill on how to improve the message of successes and if a briefing note could be circulated to the Committee.

In response to a discussion on street begging the Harm reduction and Anti-Social Behaviour Manager advised those individuals who were passive begging were rarely reported, therefore officers were not receiving the evidence of the impact this was having on people. Officers did not have the power to move on or prevent these street beggars unless a case of evidence was provided to the court for injunctive action. Officers would try to engage with these individuals to link them in with options available.

Those street beggars who were accommodated were treated the same as those who were homeless, it was the behaviour that was targeted, and all were offered the same support services.

Members welcomed and supported the work of the Police and Anti-Social Behaviour Team. Members expressed concerns regarding:

- i. Drug dealing and associated anti-social behaviour, including threatening behaviour and safeguarding of young people with a particular focus on open spaces.

- ii. Road safety focussing on delivery mopeds and electric scooters illegally used on public highways, particularly those vehicles at night without lights;
- iii. Street begging; and
- iv. Improving feedback back to the community and councillors when a crime or incident had been reported to show the positive results.

Members confirmed their agreement the above areas would remain as suggested priorities for the police, including the additional request for feedback to residents and councillors on positive results from non-urgent reporting and a focus on open spaces during the summer months

23/14/WAC Open Forum

Members of the public asked a number of questions, as set out below.

Q1: About 100 Newnham residents met on 6 June to discuss increasing alarm about the Greater Cambridge Partnership's (GCP) plans for the Barton Greenway as they affect our area. We believe that the current re-modelling of the junction of Barton Rd and Newnham Rd fails to correct prior deficiencies of amenity and safety and introduces new ones.

The plans for upgrading the path across Lammas Land (which we understand had not been notified to the City Parks Department) may damage its environment. The proposed upgrade of the cycle path and installation of a new pedestrian path along the length of Barton Road later in 2023 would lead to the total destruction of all the mature hedges, trees and planting in the verges along the northern property boundaries, devastating the attractiveness and the biodiversity of the entire street. All the changes give the lowest priority to pedestrians, who would be put at increased risk of injury.

Consultation with Newnham residents about the Greenway in late 2022 was minimal, in contrast to the effort put in to informing those living in Barton, Haslingfield and Grantchester. Responses from Newnham Residents Associations and CamCycle were submitted but had been ignored at the Newnham Rd junction, and we fear will also be for the rest of the project.

In view of the extreme desirability of preserving green spaces and biodiversity in the City, please would the City Council support our efforts to get the GCP to:

- **pause future works at Grantchester Road junction due in August and along the whole of the northern side of Barton Road in November;**
- **undertake proper consultation with local people,**
- **make changes to their scheme to protect Newnham's environment?**

In response the Chair read out the following statement from the GCP:

The Barton Greenway was taken out for formal public consultation in 2018, with additional informal public engagement undertaken in November/December 2022. The results from this and GCP's proposed responses are available online and were presented to the March 2023 Executive Board.

The scheme that is underway at the junction of Barton Road and Newnham Road is a Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) scheme. All comments and feedback received on the CCC scheme during engagement were passed across to CCC colleagues for review and consideration. The County Council wrote to affected residents and we understand also responded to key issues raised with them.

Regarding the remainder of Barton Road, the feedback and comments received during both the engagement and the road safety audit are being used to help further shape and refine the proposals and designs for this section of Greenway. From the engagement, there was much concern around the trees, vegetation and green verges along Barton Road, therefore proposals are being designed to minimise impact on existing green infrastructure as much as possible. Regarding trees along Barton Road, for the Barton Greenway there is one tree proposed to be removed to accommodate the proposals just east of Clare Road, however GCP will be planting a new tree on the grass verge to replace this. For the Haslingfield Greenway works at the junction of Barton Road and Grantchester Road, there are two saplings which will need to be relocated slightly. There are no other changes to existing trees proposed along Barton Road.

In terms of timescales and next steps, the Haslingfield Greenway works at the junction of Barton Road and Grantchester Road are currently planned to commence mid-August. Work on the rest of the Barton Road section of the Barton Greenway will not commence until November at the very earliest.

GCP will be organising a meeting with local Councillors over the next couple of weeks, to discuss proposals for the Barton Road area. We will be asking local

Members for feedback on how best to update local residents on the forward plans for this section and will then action this going forward.

Councillor Glasberg stated that although she supported the scheme, there were major issues with the proposal and more consultation was required. The following three key issues were highlighted

- i. Priority had not been given to pedestrians. There were several schools and nurseries along this route, 1.5m wide was not enough to pass one and other going in opposite directions. Children would be stepping into the cycle way. CamCycle did not support the proposals and had said that pedestrians and cyclists would be placed in conflict with one another.
- ii. There was strong environmental concern with the loss of planting and verges which were a key part of the character to Barton Road. Encouraging active travel was not just about providing a cycle superhighway but to make pathways and cycle routes places that people wanted to use.
- iii. The consultation appeared to be deficient in Newnham and was different to the way it had been carried out in the villages. Officers had held meetings and had provided alternative options during these discussions. This consultation had presented one design for Barton Road, despite being in a conservation area, with no other options for consideration having listened to feedback from residents. The design had not taken into the account the character of the area unlike the village of Grantchester, detailed literature had been provided, outlining how the scheme had responded to the character of the village, such as the removal of red asphalt. There were no such considerations for Barton Road.

Had attended the GCP Assembly the previous week to raise the issues mentioned and express concern at consultation process. There were several speakers present who had raised the same issues.

Councillor Holloway stated there had been difficulties with the short-term consultation prior to the implementation of the Newnham Road junction; this needed to be improved upon for the Grantchester Road section. Hoped to bring GCP Officers to Newnham for residents to have their say. Had been liaising with the project lead officer and had already fed back the public question.

The member of the public advised that it had been clear that the work to the Newnham Road Junction had been undertaken without consideration to the

consultation response. Expressed concern that resident's feedback would be ignored for the rest of the scheme. Plans (2023) for the end of Haslingfield Greenway opposite to the entrance of Wolfson College showed tarmac pedestrian paths over the verges along the Wolfson College railings. In the spring these verges were filled with a vast array of different flowers which would all disappear.

The 2023 plans showed the same location of the proposed tarmac pedestrian paths along Barton Road as it was in the 2022 plans (first published on 01.04.22). Therefore, had no confidence that residents' concerns would be listened to.

Time was very limited as work was due to start on Haslingfield Greenway in two months' time. Once this had been built this would commit the GCP to the rest of the scheme and no changes could be made to the cycle and pedestrian pathways.

Expressed disappointment with the Ward County Councillor and described their response to residents' concerns as vague.

Residents were currently crowd funding to take legal advice on how the scheme could be paused via the legal route. The response from senior officers at the GCP had been distant and non-committal.

Action Point: Councillor Porrer to raise with GCP officers the concerns raised, along with a recording of this debate, to encourage an immediate meeting with relevant ward councilors and members of the public.

Q2: Is there any indication when area committees might begin to meet in person again?

The Chair advised that this was a decision agreed at full council and was unlikely to change for the municipal year 23/24. A governance review was currently planned and was likely that Area Committees would be considered under this review but could not advise when this would take place. On a personal note, would welcome the Area Committee's to take place via hybrid meeting or in person if and when legislation changed to allow voting to take place virtually.

Councillor Martinelli suggested a discussion should be held whether there was any value to having a non-decision-making committee; what were the value to residents and how could residents better engage.

Councillor Holloway stated there were not many residents who engaged; perhaps needed to determine what could be the decision making function of the area committee and how to increase public engagement.

Q3: 78 Castle Street (which used to be part of Interlfora aeons ago) got boarded up a while ago. Does anyone have any insight into when it might come back into use? [It'll clearly need *alot* of work given how much pigeon guano must be in there.]

The Chair provided an update from the City Council's Empty Housing Officer which read:

Refurbishment had been delayed due to the commercial tenancy at 80. The tenancy was due to end soon. Both properties were interlinked and work cannot begin until the tenancy had ended. The owners were hoping to start work on 78 as soon as possible after this, pending the confirmation from planning on the validity of their previous planning application.

Q4: "Buses from south Cambridge are regularly blocked at The Hyde Park Corner junction by OLEM/Parker's Piece. Many years ago there was a yellow box junction prohibiting cars from blocking that junction, with penalties for those caught doing so. It was then removed for unknown reasons.

Please could the Committee ask Cambridgeshire County Council to reinstate that yellow box junction if only to improve the flow of traffic and this increase reliability if bus services otherwise delayed at the traffic lights, especially during rush hours/peak periods?

Councillor Martinelli advised that this area was being redesigned from Hills Road to Parkers Piece. At a recent meeting on the redesign, the subject of the box junction was discussed, which officers would consider but further investigation was required. Would support this suggestion.

Action Point: Councillor Porrer to send the public question to the relevant County Council Officers for information and advise of her and Councillor Martinelli's support.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm

CHAIR