



To: Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places (and Deputy Leader): Councillor Carina O'Reilly

Report by: Head of Streets and Open Spaces

Relevant scrutiny committee: Community 14/1/2016
Services
Scrutiny
Committee

Wards affected: Abbey Arbury Castle Cherry Hinton Coleridge
East Chesterton King's Hedges Market Newnham
Petersfield Queen Edith's Romsey Trumpington
West Chesterton

CAMBRIDGE CITY CENTRE ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive summary

1.1 In 2014 a review was commissioned to gain a fuller understanding of the issues affecting ease of access in and around the city centre for a range of users but particularly pedestrians, disabled and wheelchair users. The review report was considered at the March 2015 Community Services Scrutiny Committee, and in July 2015 a plan of action was developed and approved at committee to take the next steps to bring about the identified changes needed. This report provides a progress update of the actions undertaken from the action plan.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:
[1] To note the contents of the report only.

3. Background

3.1 The City Centre Accessibility review was commissioned by the council to gain an objective understanding of accessibility issues in and around the city centre. The scope of the study was to undertake a baseline review of the accessibility of

Cambridge city centre (looking at the Historic Core and Grafton areas as defined in the Local Plan 2014).

3.2 The centre of Cambridge is already under pressure from the number of people using it and with the planned growth in population together with rising numbers of students and visitors this will only increase. The ability of the city centre to cope with the increase in numbers of pedestrians is constrained by its historic and generally narrow street pattern. The current County Council Transport Plan and emerging City Council Local Plan both refer to meeting the needs of pedestrians and to proposals for improving the quality of the public realm. The accessibility review is continuing to feed into the implementation of these plans and influence other initiatives such as City Deal which will be important for users of Cambridge city centre in future.

3.3 The main conclusions from the study were that parts of the city centre were difficult to access, particularly for disabled and wheelchair users for a variety of reasons.

3.4 The Accessibility report made a number of recommendations for future action. These actions were varied in their ease of delivery, cost and complexity but focussed on advertising 'A' boards, cycle parking and public realm investment and removal of surplus street furniture.

3.5 The progress made on the action plan is set out at Appendix A to this report.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The action plan continues to be taken forward using existing budgetary provision and capacity in the service departments involved.

(b) Staffing Implications

Capacity continues to be needed to secure the future implementation of identified actions. This capacity continues to be found from existing budgets.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

The accessibility review and action plan were not subject to EQIA.

(d) Environmental Implications

There were no adverse climate change implications from the accessibility review study and none have been identified from the action plan. Any measures to promote easier movement, access, walking and cycling activities in the city centre would normally be expected to be positive for climate change.

(e) Procurement

The procurement of the original study followed the council's procurement regulations. Any further procurement involved in delivering the action plan will be undertaken in accordance with the procurement and financial regulations of the council.

(f) Consultation and communication

The accessibility study was circulated to stakeholders and interested groups who have been asked to give feedback to help inform the development of the action plan. The Access Officer and the Disability Consultative Panel received a presentation on the review findings and meetings have been held with the Cambridge BID. Engagement with these and other stakeholders, such as Cambridge Cycling Campaign, has been and will continue to be undertaken as part of developing and delivering on the actions in the action plan.

(g) Community Safety

There are no adverse community safety implications. Improvements to personal accessibility and the wider public realm are likely to have a positive effect upon access and public safety.

5. Background papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

1. Report to Community Services Scrutiny Committee March 2015
2. Cambridge City Centre Accessibility Study 2015
3. Report to Community Services Scrutiny Committee July 2015

6. Appendices

Appendix A – City Centre Accessibility Study 2015 – Progress Report

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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APPENDIX A: City Centre Accessibility Review – Progress Report

	Issue	Category of problem	Specific Issue or problem area	Action proposed, responsibility and timetable	Progress Update
1.	Street Obstructions	Proliferation of Advertising Boards	<p>Proliferation and enforcement of unacceptably located 'A' boards in the City Centre</p> <p>Develop proactive combined signage solutions with partners for selected streets where</p>	<p>1. Develop new Policy for advertising 'A' Boards in the City Centre including consultation with stakeholders and communications about the introduction of this approach. Timescale - end of 2015. Lead Services: – Streets and Open Spaces and Planning Services</p> <p>2. Adopt and implement new policy and promote voluntary removal campaign from Jan 2016 - Lead Service: Streets and Open Spaces with support from Planning Services and the County Council</p> <p>3. Proactive communications approach with business community throughout – Lead Service: Streets and Open Spaces</p> <p>4. Enforcement approach and criteria to be set out in the policy, identifying circumstances where voluntary removal has been unsuccessful [Above actions: City Council has lead responsibility. Communications and enforcement with support from partners].</p> <p>5. Work with Businesses and Cambridge BID to identify where pro-active solutions could be</p>	<p>An 'A board' policy has been drafted based on the results of the accessibility study and research of similar policies of other councils.</p> <p>Prior to finalising the proposed policy, from early January to March 2016, an audit of 'A' boards being displayed in the city will be conducted. The audit will be used to identify locations where A boards meet the proposed policy and are acceptable; and where they don't and are not. In addition, the Council will work with the BID on a soft engagement and awareness raising programme for city centre businesses and other stakeholders. This will include officers visiting city centre businesses, which use A-boards, to help inform them of the accessibility review and proposed A board policy and why it is needed; and to promote voluntary removal of 'A' boards and consideration of alternative methods to promote increased footfall in secondary locations of the city centre.</p> <p>The results of the audit and business engagement programme will be used shape the final proposed A board policy, which we aim to present to Committee for approval in July 2016</p>

		visibility is genuinely an issue for traders e.g. Green Street.	developed by traders/property owners, eg. Green Street. City Council lead concurrent with policy development and adoption. Implementation depending upon proposals that can be developed. Funding to be sought from external sources.	
	Cycles and cycle parking issues	Bicycle parking facilities	Particular issue in Sidney Street where cycle racks are accessed from the pavement. City Council to obtain quotation for reorientation of racks. Budget permitting City Council to commission reconfiguration of Sidney Street cycle racks by spring 2016.	The on-street cycle parking stands in Sidney Street outside Sainsbury's store are being reoriented so that they can be easily accessed from the carriageway side, rather than the footway. The racks are the high capacity style that can only be conveniently accessed from one end. The footway between the frontage of the building and the stands is relatively narrow for the number of people using it, which is compounded by people using the area to access the racks. A new bollard to both this and the next line of stands immediately to the north towards Hobbs sports shop is being introduced to better protect them from damage from vehicles pulling on and off the adjacent loading bays. The works are scheduled to be undertaken in January 2016
		Abandoned cycle removal	Existing enforcement regime plus enhancements noted below	The city rangers collect over 1500 abandoned and derelict cycles a year. One officer is dedicated to the city centre with additional support from colleagues to provide Monday to Saturday cover for dealing with abandoned cycles and those causing obstructions. Between June and August 2015 an operation to remove abandoned bike locks from street furniture was conducted in the city centre, over 200 locks were removed. Abandoned bike locks can take up cycle
		Badly parked cycles	Current pro-active approach operated by the Ranger teams to be enhanced	

				<p>publicity to be organised by Streets and Open Spaces.</p>	<p>parking space and cause trip hazards. Steps are now in place to stop a large number of locks from littering the city streets and cycle parking areas.</p> <p>In addition redeveloped web pages and an online reporting procedure have been developed for abandoned bicycles to speed up the notification process. Further work is planned as part of the departmental twitter account to promote how to report abandoned bicycles to the rangers.</p> <p>Work is also ongoing with partners as part of the Cycle Crime Tasking Group including Cambridgeshire Police.</p>
		Licensed activities	Licensed cafes and outdoor eating areas add to vitality but also take up public space	<p>Policy recently reviewed by the licensing authority (County Council) in consultation with City Council. No further action on this.</p>	<p>No action was required on this issue.</p>
		Unlicensed activities	Peddlers and Punt touts operating on city centre streets	<p>City Centre Management Group already established (looking specifically at Peddler's and Punt Tout problems). No additional actions recommended.</p>	<p>No action was required on this issue.</p>
		Street trading	Street trading pitches operate within the City Centre area	<p>Up to date policy in place, no action recommended</p>	<p>No action was required on this issue.</p>
2	Public Realm	Maintenance	Frequency and funding of maintenance of City Centre streets	<p>The City Deal City Centre Access and Capacity Project will be the main opportunity for the City and County Council to consider these issues. City Deal funding will</p>	<p>The City Council will shortly begin discussions with the County Council. The work has not yet progressed to any level of detail yet and further updates will be provided in due course.</p>

		Standards	Some areas fall below best practice standards for pavements and crossings	be the main funding stream, along with any s.106/CIL contributions that can be secured. This City Deal project is now being initiated. City Centre Public Realm Strategy to be commissioned ahead of local Plan adoption to inform City Deal projects. City Council to commission public realm strategy to align with City Deal projects timetable. Environment Scrutiny Committee to oversee adoption of public realm strategy in 2016	
		Quality	Quality of public realm in places, quality of maintenance of the public realm. Ability of public bodies to keep City Centre public realm maintained to a high standard		
		Investment	Lack of available investment for public realm enhancements other than as part of City Deal or s.106/CIL		
		Street furniture	No proactive approach to reviewing and removing old, abandoned and unnecessary street furniture including signs.	Brief for commissioning of Public Realm strategy to Include audit of existing street furniture. Seek removal/replacement of abandoned street furniture following audit through City Deal projects or pro-actively with County Council as funds permit.	
3	Management of streets and	Co-ordination of	Are the agencies involved	Audit and review of existing arrangements. Develop and promote	A desktop audit and review has commenced and a key stakeholder group will be convened to review

	spaces	management and maintenance activities in the City centre	optimising their joint activities, funding and problem solving interventions	new collaborative working arrangements between partners and agencies if beneficial and will deliver improvements. Complete review by end of 2015 and report back to CSSC in early 2016. City Council to initiate review. Streets and Open Spaces and Planning Services to complete.	results and any recommended changes early in 2016.
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