

WEST CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE

28 September 2017

7.00 - 9.10 pm

Present

Area Committee Members: Councillors Nethsingha (Chair), Holt (Vice-Chair), Bick, Cantrill, Gillespie, Hipkin, Ratcliffe, Harrison and Richards

Other Councillor in Attendance:

Councillor Scutt

Officers:

Head of Corporate Strategy: Andrew Limb

Operations Manager – Community Engagement and Enforcement: Wendy Young

Committee Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe

Other Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Visit Cambridge and Beyond: Emma Thornton

Cambridgeshire County Council:

- Bus Operation & Facilities Manager: Campbell Ross-Bain
- Greenways Project Manager: Simon Manville
- Traffic Manager: Sonia Hanson

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

17/22/WAC Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Gehring.

17/23/WAC Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

17/24/WAC Minutes

Councillor Scutt referenced the minute to the request for West Central Committee's support for a Local Highway Improvement (LHI) bid for double yellow lines on Carisbrooke Road. She had advised that this had been requested under LHI by the North Area Committee.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2017 were then approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17/25/WAC Matters and Actions Arising From the Minutes

Councillor Gillespie reminded the Committee that at the last meeting Councillors had asked the police to prioritise the issue of drug dealing (and also drug use in the street) in the Maids Causeway area; there had since been a number of new incidents reported with the situation getting worse.

The Anti-Social Behaviour team had sent a letter to Auckland Road residents advising on how to contact the police and also provided the contact details of Sarah Steggles' (Street based Anti-Social Behavior Project Co-ordinator). However this issue also concerned James Street; Parsonage Street; Brunswick Terrace; Brunswick Gardens and Midsummer Common, but Police resources were limited.

Lynda Kilkelly, Safer Communities Section Manager, confirmed to the Committee there had been a number of complaints from a variety of addresses. Due to the high number of complaints it has been decided to hold a residents meeting on this matter on 18 October, the Conference Room, Grafton Centre, 6.00pm. Information discussed would be collated and a plan formulated in conjunction with Police representatives who would also be present at the meeting.

Leaflets were available which provided more information on the meeting.

Councillor Bick stated that he had attended a meeting with the Divisional Police Commander that morning who had confirmed that this matter was very much an active Police priority.

The Action Sheet was then noted and an updated copy could be viewed at the following link under 'Updated Action Sheet from meeting held on 28/09/17':

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=117&MId=3341&Ver=4>

17/26/WAC Open Forum

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

Bev Nicolson: The pedestrian crossing on Albion Row had looked like it was at long last taking shape earlier this year. Since then, hardly anything has happened except two Belisha Beacons being installed. Those beacons are not yet working and there was no markings painted on the road. The barrier would still be across it if it hadn't been moved. What is going on?

Both Councillors Richards and Nethsingha advised UK Power Networks were scheduled to return to the crossing to connect the new power supply to the Belisha Beacons on 17th October. The lining work would then be completed to enable the crossing to be commissioned and subsequently would become operational in early November at the latest.

There had been numerous attempts to connect the power to the beacons with issues experienced with the location of ducting and existing utility equipment. This had led to work to be rescheduled by UK Power Networks.

The importance of completing this crossing as soon as possible had been expressed by the County Council and sent to all parties involved.

Susan Stobbs, Chair of the Friends of Midsummer Common: Local residents were very concerned about the significant increase over the last six months in drug dealing and drug use around Midsummer Common and particularly in the Community Orchard in broad daylight. Recent publicity has led to a reduction of incidents, but this just means that they will have gone elsewhere. I would like to ask whether the Council is reviewing its strategy for dealing with homelessness and drug use in the city, particularly in the light of the reduction in funding for mental health services and the chronic shortage of affordable housing.

Councillor Nethsingha stated part of this question had been covered under the previous item of 'Matters Arising from the Minutes' with the notification of the planned residents meeting, to discuss the visual increase of drug use in and around Maids Causeway.

Councillor Harrison directed that she would undertake to look into the matter of mental health issues highlighted in the question. This would link into a study currently being undertaken by her and Councillor Bick on street life issues in the west area of Cambridge. The Committee would be updated at the next meeting. **(ACTION)**

Councillor Hipkin: Could it be recorded that 9 members of the public were present at this meeting and this information is shown in the minutes of each meeting. The cost of running the area committee meeting could have been better allocated to the Council's anti-poverty strategy.

Councillor Nethsingha noted Councillor Hipkin's comments.

Bev Nicolson: Could the Chair establish if question(s) submitted by the public had to be present in person in order for their question(s) to be discussed.

Councillor Nethsingha confirmed a member of the public did not have to be present in order for their question to be put forward to the Committee.

17/27/WAC Managing Tourism in the City Centre

The Chair welcomed Emma Thornton, CEO of Visit Cambridge and Beyond to the meeting; Sonia Hanson, Traffic Manager and Campbell Ross-Bain, Bus Operation & Facilities Manager, both from Cambridgeshire County Council.

Emma Thornton detailed the following points:

- i. The role of Visit Cambridge and Beyond was to grow the value of the visitor economy by promoting Cambridge and the surrounding area and providing the best possible visitor experience. It was a non-profit organisation with no political or geographical boundaries.
- ii. The main objective was to develop strategic alliances with partners in and outside of Cambridge to change the perception of the city as a key day trip destination.
- iii. The organisation was 96% reliant on earned income with only 4% of its funding now coming from public funding. Compared to similar bodies nationally the organisation was unique with only Oxford operating a similar model but with higher public funding.
- iv. The organisation also run the Visitor Information Centre which dealt with around 350,000 face to face enquires; 500,000 telephone / e-mail queries and were responsible for the private and public guided walking tour service used by 80,000 visitors a year.
- v. Between 2013-2015 there had been a significant increase in visitors' numbers with a slight increase in 2015-2016 which were as follows:

5.4million visitors in 2013

7.4 million visitors in 2015

7.6 million visitors in 2016

- vi. Tourism was responsible for 20% of employment in the city.
- vii. There had never been a joint strategy for managing tourism in the greater Cambridge area. This new initiative now brought the opportunity to spread the economic value gained from tourism to the surrounding area, encouraging visitors to stay longer and explore further.
- viii. The aim is to change the perception of Cambridge as a day trip destination, but this is deeply engrained and would take some time.

Comments from the Committee and members of the public on Queen's Road:

- i. The number of coaches parking to bring in day tourists to the City had increased considerably over the years. The road was not built for this volume of coaches.
- ii. At weekends in the summer the area was intolerable with an overflow of coaches breaking various traffic codes: parking on double yellow lines; double parking; parking on grass verges and parking beyond the city boundary.
- iii. Over the summer the Police had been called out to deal with dangerous parking.
- iv. Little or no enforcement was undertaken to send a message to the coach tourist companies.
- v. One enforcement officer should be allocated to permanently patrol the road in the height of the tourist season.
- vi. A review was urgently needed with alternative options investigated.
- vii. Would not be surprised if a fatality occurred.
- viii. Coach parking in the park and rides sites across the city were not being used.
- ix. The park and ride sites were crucial to negate the problem and suggested that coaches should be forced to terminate at these sites.
- x. The road was a major trunk road into the city; when the road was blocked with coaches this created major traffic jams into the city and impacted on slowing down the flow of traffic elsewhere while drivers searched for alternative routes.

- xi. Asked if the coach companies were aware of the alternative coach parking on Chesterton and Trumpington Road but also questioned if Chesterton Road was the right location.
- xii. Large amounts of litter were left behind.
- xiii. Residents of Newham would be able to advise officers when the peak parking time of coaches occurred.
- xiv. Some coach companies offered a 45 minute visit to the city as part of a day tour and questioned what financial benefits this would bring to the Cambridge economy.
- xv. Did not believe that the County Highways department were aware of the scale of the problem.
- xvi. A complete ban was required on Queen's Road rather than providing increased parking capacity.
- xvii. Suggested the installation of a box junction and CCTV to prevent the dangerous parking.

Other issues raised from the Committee and members of the public.

- i. Suggested a tourism tax supporting culture and community in the city.
- ii. Day tourist should be discouraged making it harder to visit the city for a few hours whilst encouraging tourists to stay longer.
- iii. Tourists should be encouraged to disperse outside of the City
- iv. Inspire tourists to stay longer by providing a 'Cambridge Pass' which would give free or discounted entry to places of interest; discounted or free bus / train travel.
- v. Important that the city remained inclusive and open to everyone which was something to be proud of.
- vi. An integrated approach to the matter was required.
- vii. The University should take a more proactive and joined up approach to encourage visitors to stay longer.
- viii. Queried if it was possible to extend the tourist season in the city by offering discounts and incentives off peak season.
- ix. Suggested joint funding between the County and the City Council to finance the increased capacity of one permanent enforcement officer to deal with the issue of tourist coach parking.

In response Emma Thornton and County officers made the following statements:

- i. Funding from the Greater Cambridge Partnership had been allocated to expand coach parking at the Trumpington park and ride site with an additional five spaces. This site was also used as a collection point for local schools as a pick up and drop off point for local pupils; this would remove a large volume of cars from the city's road. Therefore the expansion was much needed as the coaches could use this site in-between drop off and pickups.
- ii. Data showed that the Madingley Road park and ride site was used by coaches. The site could hold up to 25 coaches if required and had done so in the past.
- iii. A bid had been submitted to the Greater Cambridge Partnership for funding to canvas the tourist coach industry to determine how often and when they visited the city, and to promote alternative parking on Trumpington Road and Chesterton Road.
- iv. Investigation had determined that it was not clear to the coach tourist companies and the independent day tourist that the city centre could be accessed from other parts of the inner ring road; signage needed to be improved.
- v. Suggested coach parking spaces could be increased in the short term on Queen's Road while an alternative solution was found.
- vi. 67% of international visitors believed that England stopped at London. Visit Cambridge and Beyond were working with other organisations to change visitor's behaviour by building itineraries to outside destinations which were accessible from and around Cambridge. This was a key issue in changing visitor's behaviour.
- vii. Other heritage cities such as Bath, Oxford and York all had confirmed they experienced the same problem with tourist coach parking and had found no fixed solution.
- viii. The problem of tourist coach parking was magnified by the city's compact narrow street scene.
- ix. Most of the attractions in Cambridge were free so it would be difficult to promote a 'Cambridge Pass'.
- x. Visit Cambridge and Beyond were currently supporting the development of a new initiative called 'The Cambs Pass'. This was a promotional pass

- that saved money across family attractions, restaurants and many other different businesses in Cambridgeshire.
- xi. Proposed that the decision of tour operators to drop off on Queens Road was the easier position, because the directions to the city centre was short and direct. To be dropped off on Chesterton Road would be a 'voyage of discovery'.
 - xii. Cambridge was a city for all seasons, with the peak times for tourism in July and August.
 - xiii. Not aware there was the legislation nationally to introduce a tourist tax.
 - xiv. Important that the city did not isolate itself from visitors.
 - xv. The visitor economy was vital to Cambridge.
 - xvi. Due to the lack of resources it was not possible to have an enforcement officer to permanently patrol Queen's Road.
 - xvii. There were three permanent coach parking spaces on Queens Road with an additional three opened in the summer. There were a further three on Trumpington Road and on Chesterton Road.
 - xviii. Communication with tourist coach companies was critical in reducing this problem.

17/28/WAC Greater Cambridge Partnership Greenway Projects

The Committee received a verbal presentation from the Greenways Project Manager, Simon Manville, regarding the Cambridge Greenways Project.

The presentation outlined the 12 proposed routes. The project was designed to connect the villages surrounding Cambridge through a cohesive network for pedestrians, cyclists and equine riders. The project was currently going through its pre consultation stage; this involved holding meetings in various locations to gain public input and feedback. Once completed, the designs would be drawn up and a public consultation on the preferred options would be undertaken.

The Greenways Project Manager highlighted that the whole aim of the scheme was to reduce vehicle congestion so the key focus was on cycle provision.

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

- i. Noted the importance of circular routes and queried if these types of routes could be incorporated as part of the project.

- ii. Queried why the routes/paths would not be completely segregated from roads?
- iii. Stated that it may be difficult for cyclists and pedestrians to both use the routes together. Asked whether the routes would be lit up?
- iv. Expressed disappointment that in funding terms the promotion of leisure, such as walking and cycling were low down on the list of priorities.
- v. Stated there should be an adjustment to the objectives to the suggested links.

The Greenways Project Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. There was an opportunity to make the routes as pleasant and as easy to use for leisure users and would be sensitive to the local concerns.
- ii. Routes in and out of the city had only been looked at in the first instance. There was a possibility that orbital routes would be looked at a later date.
- iii. The route would encompass small roads, making entirely separate routes/ paths would be incredibly costly.
- iv. Confirmed that the paths would be wide and could potentially include white separation lines to stop collisions between cyclists and pedestrians. Lighting would be costly to have along all the routes so it would be strategically placed in areas where it was most beneficial.
- v. Currently there was no budget to deliver this project as this was only at pre consultation stage with £480,000 for development funds.
- vi. Estimated cost to deliver the scheme was between £10,000,000 million to £20,000,000. Funding would be secured from the Greater Cambridge Partnership, in 2020.

Councillor Scutt stressed the important of signage to assist with a unified network of links.

The Greenways Project Manager stated that Cambridge Regional College had been approached asking students to design a logo for the project which would be placed on all the signage.

17/29/WAC Environmental Report - WCAC

The Committee received a report from the Operations Manager – Community Engagement and Enforcement.

The report outlined an overview of City Council Refuse and Environment and Streets and Open Spaces service activity relating to the geographical area

served by the West/Central Area Committee. The report identified the reactive and proactive service actions undertaken in the previous quarter, including the requested priority targets, and reported back on the recommended issues and associated actions. It also included key officer contacts for the reporting of waste and refuse and public realm issues.

In response to Members' and the public comments and questions the Operations Manager – Community Engagement and Enforcement, said the following:

- i. Comments on the 'temporary bins' which had been on Lamas Land for approximately 18 months needed to be reconsidered for design and permanent location. As such, they would be taken back to the Parks Team for action.
- ii. Agreed to include regular clearing of leaves along the highways as a priority going forward if the Committee approved.
- iii. Would enquire if a bin could be installed on Chesterton Lane.
- iv. Welcomed the positive comments from Members on the work that had been undertaken on Paradise Nature Reserve.
- v. Noted the comments regarding the increase of litter in Fitzroy Street and Burleigh Street; Enforcement Officers had increased the number of fixed penalty notices for littering in the last quarter. Numerous fines had been issued to local business regarding their breach of statutory waste notices, as well as business being issued notices regarding their waste duty of care.
- vi. A number of businesses within the city had been issued with the higher range fixed penalties for fly tipping commercial waste where large quantities of waste had been dumped.
- vii. Meetings had been held with the Police and representatives from County Council's drugs and alcohol team where an increase in needles had been reported. This information was also e-mailed on a regular basis in-between those meetings with the Police and County Council.
- viii. Unfortunately due to the narrow design of Hobson Passage there was little that could be done regarding the storing of trade bins on the highway. The area was checked on a regular basis by Officers with a number of businesses fined for not taking the correct responsibility of storage.
- ix. Noted the comment regarding the protractible needles which were safer to regular needles, although the level of rubbish would remain the same.

The Committee discussed the following as additional and revised recommendations for action:

- i. Enforcement and City Ranger patrols in the City Centre to address issues of illegally deposited trade waste on Fitzroy and Burleigh Street.
- ii. Streets and Open Spaces regular clearing of leaves along the highways.
- iii. Dog warden patrols to target irresponsible dog owners on Midsummer Common.
- iv. Enforcement patrols to address abandoned vehicles in the Castle Ward.

Following discussion, Members **unanimously resolved** to approve priorities for action as amended above.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

CHAIR

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