

**WEST CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE**

9 September 2021  
6.30 - 8.50 pm

**Present**

**Area Committee Members:** Councillors Gehring (Chair), Porrer (Vice-Chair), S. Baigent, Bick, Gilderdale, Nethsingha, Payne, S. Smith, Sweeney and Rae

**Officers:**

Head of of Environmental Services: Joel Carré

Community Engagement and Enforcement Manager: Wendy Johnston

Committee Manager: James Goddard

**Other Officers in Attendance:**

Greater Cambridge Partnership: Jo Baker

Domus Bursar of King’s College: Philip Isaac

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**21/17/WAC Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from County Councillor Gay. Councillor Sweeney would join at the start of the Open Forum.

**21/18/WAC Declarations of Interest**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Councillor Gehring	21/23/WAC	Personal: Works for University of Cambridge.
Councillor Gehring	21/23/WAC	Personal: Would speak as Ward Councillor. Vice Chair to take over as Vice Chair-in-the-Chair for this item.

**21/19/WAC Minutes**

The notes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021 were noted.

## **21/20/WAC Matters and Actions Arising From the Minutes**

The committee action sheet was noted. Councillors would send any updates to the Committee Manager outside of the meeting.

Minute reference: 21/14/WAC Open Forum

- Action: Councillor Porrer raised an item on funding for insurance from the Council for Residents Associations and volunteer groups. Councillor Porrer to investigate with officers.
- Progress:
  - Councillor Porrer had begun work but few people were around to contact over the summer so action to be carried over to next WCAC.

Agenda item: Castle Mound // Minute reference: 20/5/WAC

- Action: Councillor Chadwick to monitor Suffolk County Council progress on determining rights of way and town green status.
- Progress:
  - Councillor Payne said the Development and Regulation Committee at Suffolk County Council had agreed a permanent public footpath/right of way up Castle Mound.

## **21/21/WAC Open Forum**

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

1. A member of the public raised the following issues (via written statement read by Committee Manager):
  - i. Would the council be offering any alternative cycle parking while Park Street car park is demolished and rebuilt?
  - ii. Was there any information about what the 'limited works on the ground floor' planned for this October will involve?

Councillor Porrer said:

- i. During demolition there would be rejigging of ground floor parking arrangements. Would forward on details to the member of the public.
- ii. The new development had replacement cycle parking facilities although there was no planning requirement for an interim solution

Action Point: Councillor Porrer to liaise with Fiona Bryant in response to public question: "Will the council be offering any alternative cycle parking while Park

Street car park is demolished and rebuilt?" Councillor Porrer understood that there was no planning obligation to provide parking during demolition, but would follow up with Fiona Bryant to see if any provision could be made.

2. A member of the public raised the following issues (via written statement read by Committee Manager):
  - i. I am the secretary of Cambridge Riverside (Midsummer Common) Residents' Association.
  - ii. At a residents' meeting on 2 September 2021, significant concerns were expressed about the impact of both the Voi scheme and the increased use of electrical cycles and powered scooters on common areas around the city generally and specifically on Midsummer Common where it is becoming seriously dangerous to walk. There are issues citywide, but on Midsummer Common, which is a key cycle route into the city, there are particular pressures due to narrow paths, specific pinch points and high usage for leisure. This will be heightened by the opening of the Chisholm Trail. The Common is a much-loved recreational venue used by large numbers of people of different ages for many different purposes. The relatively narrow pathways are well used by pedestrians, joggers, cyclists and mobility scooters as well as large family groups including toddlers on micro scooters and strider bikes.
  - iii. It is very noticeable that there has been a marked rise in powered vehicles on common areas over the past 18 months; fast food orders now seem to be routinely delivered by mopeds or electric bicycles and this, combined with the Voi Scheme on our roads, puts pedestrians increasingly in a vulnerable position. Whilst we applaud and encourage the use of alternative more environmentally friendly forms of transport across the City, we do fear that there currently appears to be a lack of regulation and that before long there could be a serious accident.
  - iv. We would therefore like to ask you to clarify the Council's current policy and future intentions in managing and regulating this matter and how it will balance the needs of pedestrians with making provision for these new initiatives?

Councillor Nethsingha said there was a blurring between powered and non-powered cycles and scooters. The use of scooters and bicycles on commons was encouraged, but not powered ones. The City Council and County Council could not take action at present, Central Government would have to be lobbied to develop a policy first.

The Head of Environmental Services said:

- i. The City Council were responsible for parks, but these had public rights of way.
- ii. One way to manage powered bikes/scooters was to put in physical barriers, but these would negatively impact legitimate users.
- iii. E-scooters were prohibited from parks but people still used them there. The City Council and Police were working together to address issues.
- iv. The City Council and Voi were working on a public trial of e-scooters that would last until October 2021. Voi had signed up to a code of conduct as scheme operator to use e-scooters legitimately. There were no reported problem in the city centre. Voi scooters were speed restricted.
- v. The City Council supported travel that did not negatively impact on other users.

Councillors Gehring and Porrer asked to be involved in a meeting between Head of Environmental Services and Cambridge Riverside (Midsummer Common) Residents' Association to discuss concerns including riding of small motor bikes on commons. It was suggested that Lammas Land and Queen's Green Resident Associations could also be invited.

Action Point: Councillor Nethsingha to start process of County Council lobbying Central Government to address issue.

3. A member of the public raised the following issues:
  - i. The Histon Road Area Residents' Association wished to present a copy of their book to the West Central Area Committee. This was given to Councillor Payne.
  - ii. A copy was also given to North Area Committee as a thank you for Area Committee support of the community group through community grants.
  - iii. The book was on sale if people wished to buy it, free copies had been given to schools and community groups.

### **21/22/WAC Cambourne to Cambridge (C2C)-presentation from Greater Cambridge Partnership**

The Committee received a presentation from the Greater Cambridge Partnership on the Cambourne to Cambridge Better Transport Project.

Members of the public and committee raised the following issues:

- i. Impact of route on traffic flow.
- ii. Could the route be controlled to control where buses went and stop them turning left at Grange Road junction?
- iii. Concern over environmental impact of scheme.
- iv. Queried if narrow streets could accommodate the proposed 10 buses per hour?
- v. Requested restricting busway to be used solely by electric vehicles.
- vi. It was desirable that people had space to bring bikes on buses.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership representative said the following in response to questions from members of the public and committee:

- i. Paul van de Bulk (Greater Cambridge Partnership) had begun a dialogue with officers to establish a permanent traffic regulation order for 20mph on Histon Road from Akeman Street to Victoria Junction.
- ii. Junction concerns (eg Grange Road) would be covered by a road safety audit.
- iii. The intention of the city access scheme was to reduce traffic and congestion in the area.
- iv. No fly over was proposed. A bridge and earth embankment would be used.
- v. Greater Cambridge Partnership would apply for a Transport and Works Act order so they could control who used the busway. The intention was that only electric vehicles could use the route. At present a suitable vehicle is not yet on the market but it was expected that such vehicles would be available by opening. As a minimum a Euro VI type low emission vehicle may be used as a short term alternative.
- vi. Only a modest number of vehicles driven by professional drivers would use the route instead of lots of vehicles driven by possibly less skilled drivers.
- vii. Wheelchairs needed to be given priority over bikes for space on buses.

### **21/23/WAC Access to Grantchester Meadows-discussion following actions taken over the summer**

Councillor Porrer took the Chair so Councillor Gehring could participate as a Ward Councillor. Councillor Porrer would act as a neutral party as Vice-Chair-in-the-Chair as she did not represent Newnham Ward.

The Committee noted a 'statement on access at Grantchester Meadows' on the agenda.

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

1. Made the following points:
  - i. Referring to the previous discussion of the public footpath adjacent to Skaters' Meadow.
  - ii. The area being discussed is a footpath, not a car park, and has been so for over 200 years.
  - iii. Keeping vehicles out of this area would not restrict access to the Meadows at all -- Council officers visiting the site recognised that vehicles driving and parking there are a danger to pedestrians and cyclists, and the proposed bollards to protect them would greatly improve the access to the Meadows for the vast majority of users. It is policy for both the City and County Councils to support active travel and give priority to people walking and cycling.
  - iv. This whole matter has nothing to do with the restrictions on swimming etc. in the Meadows that were introduced by King's College that will be discussed later. It was simply an accident of timing that they both arose at the same point this year.
  - v. People who genuinely must drive can park in nearby streets; recent detailed counts confirm that there are always numerous places free. There are restrictions for only 3 hours in the middle of the day, and Blue Badge holders can park anywhere without restriction. Councillors may wish to support a few tweaks to the RP rules, which would create even more local parking for those who really must drive between 11 and 2pm: add 2 disabled bays on the road right by the entrance, add 2 pay & display spots in nearby streets; issue parking permits to the Swimming Club by deeming it a local business in the same way that our local shops are issued such permits. These changes would of course require local consultation.
  - vi. With these changes, I think Councillors will agree that any objections to making this area vehicle-free are met.
2. Made the following points:
  - i. Queried who owned the Meadows Car Park.
  - ii. Supported rewilding in the area.
  - iii. Wanted a data driven discussion on how to make best use of the space based on peoples' needs/wants. Expressed concern over a lack of consultation but welcomed that the City Council was trying to seek residents' views.
  - iv. The Meadows were treated as a free facility for outdoor swimming, walking and cycling. People would have to pay to use other facilities

such as Jesus Green so could not visit them as often. They would also have parking restrictions which the Meadows did not.

The Head of Environmental Services said:

- i. The City Council does not own the land, they were trying to ascertain who did. The land is not registered to with any title or owner.
- ii. The City Council could not effect any changes on the land until ownership was established.
- iii. Undertook to liaise with speaker about any title document information she may have.
- iv. The City Council recognised that residents felt the land was important and there was a public right of way over it.
- v. If there were any changes to vehicle parking facilities then the impact of the Equality Act would have to be considered as the Council were obliged to ensure disabled bays were provided in carparks.

Councillor Nethsingha said

- i. The City Council and County Council agreed there was no clear land owner.
- ii. The lack of community consensus on how to use the land meant there was no clear way forward until land ownership was clarified.
- iii. Grantchester Meadows and Skaters Meadow issues were related:
  - a. People had changed how they used the land and car park over the summer.
  - b. It would take time to get community consensus on how to use the land.

3. Councillor Gehring made the following points:

- i. Referred to a survey undertaken by a resident:
  - a. Resident had undertaken a survey regarding Skaters' Meadow footpath parking and footpath use Sat/Sun 24/25 July and Sat/Sun 31 July/1 Aug.
  - b. Parking on the path was a threat to walkers, cyclists, trees and verges.
  - c. The footpath was used by builders, all day commuters and overnight campervans as free of charge parking in Cambridge
- ii. Jesus Green was a better site for cold water swimming. Acknowledged there was a fee for this and people went to the Meadows as they could (river) swim for free.
- iii. A regulated car park was required. The current parking arrangements were dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians who were at risk from collisions with cars.

The Committee commented that the Meadows were treated as an unofficial car park when they were a footpath and a bit of waste land. The City Council prioritised pedestrians then bikes then cars. The majority of people who used the space were from outside of Newnham Ward who travelled in by car. If the City Council wanted people to use its open spaces, something had to be done to ensure there was sufficient parking.

### **21/24/WAC Environmental Report-look back at six monthly data on the work by the city council**

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

The report outlined an overview of the council's Streets and Open Spaces, Environmental Health and Shared Waste service activity in the Area Committee area over the past six months.

The Committee discussed the following issues:

- i. Fly tipping near Adam & Eve Recycling Centre because the Centre always seemed full.
- ii. Local businesses seemed to dump commercial waste in Adam & Eve Recycling Centre which should be used by residents.

Action: Community Engagement and Enforcement Manager to seek update from Shared Waste Service concerning rumors that Adam & Eve Recycling Centre would close.

Action: Community Engagement and Enforcement Manager to seek response from Streets and Open Spaces Operations Service about report that 'black bin' and 'recycling' items were being removed from Jesus Green bins in same bag ie waste streams were being mixed instead of separated.

### **21/25/WAC City Centre Recovery - Oral Update by Head of Environmental Services**

The update outlined:

- i. Officers had developed good relationships with partners around the table.
- ii. Visitors welcomed infrastructure improvement work such as benches around the city. There was also a website where people could book punt



tours, sign up to visitor attractions and receive event promotional information. These were implemented using funding from the Combined Authority.

- iii. An electric bus and lighting projects were also in development. The environmental impact was reviewed as part of the projects. The intention was to use low emission LED lighting and a low emission electric vehicle as a mobile tourist centre.
- iv. £110,000 of Central Government funding had been received for activities and events to improve the city centre visitor offer.
- v. Community art could be located in some empty shops.
- vi. Details would come to 7 October 2021 Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee regarding the Destination Management Organisation to replace Visit Cambridge.
- vii. Consultation had been undertaken on the market square project over the summer. Responses were being analysed. Best use of space and demountable stall designs were being reviewed. Details would come to 24 March 2022 Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm

**CHAIR**

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