

WEST CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE

28 September 2022

7.00 - 8.15 pm

Present

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

Officers:

Head of Environmental Services: Joel Carré

Committee Manager and Meeting Producer: Sarah Steed

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

22/15/WAC Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from City Councillor S.Baigent and County Councillor Gay.

22/16/WAC Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

22/17/WAC Notes of last meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 16 June 2022 were noted.

22/18/WAC Matters and Actions Arising

Councillor Holloway provided the following update on the South Newnham Neighbourhood Plan which was as follows:

- i. The Neighbourhood Forum was redesignated on 21 July 2022 following a public consultation on the application to reapply as a Forum.
- ii. A total of eleven comments were received on the redesignation, five in support and six in objection.
- iii. The role of the Forum was to prepare a neighbourhood plan, anyone in the local area can contribute to preparing the plan and engage in public consultation on the draft plan.

- iv. Once the plan has been through the examination process, the local community would be able to vote in a local referendum to decide whether the plan should be used to determine planning applications in the area.

Councillor Holloway then thanked all those who had been involved in the process so far and encouraged all residents in Newnham to engage in the process.

22/19/WAC Open Forum

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

Question 1.

The situation of scooters and electric vehicles has not improved on common areas referenced below and residents remain very concerned, as the situation is much worse now than it was in September 2021. At a recent Residents' Association meeting attended by Cllr Porrer on 19 July 2022, this was raised as a local worry again. Residents remain surprised by the fact that no action appears to have been taken yet, and greatly concerned by the increased number of electric bikes and scooters that are using all the common pathways (Midsummer Common, Stourbridge Common and Jesus Green) on a regular basis every day. We would ask that this matter is raised again on our behalf and will be interested to know specifically what action has been taken since we last forwarded this question and indeed what progress is perceived to have been made.

[Question for Open Forum item West Central Area Committee Meeting September 2021]

Scooters and Electric Bicycles on Common Areas

I am the secretary of Cambridge Riverside (Midsummer Common) Residents' Association which represents 10 townhouses and approximately 200 apartments in a relatively new development overlooking Midsummer Common. We live adjacent to the Common and residents use it on a regular basis.

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. This is all welcomed and to be encouraged.

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.

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?]

In response the Head of Environment Services stated that the matter was a complex issue and powers sat with different authorities and the police.

Currently there was the national trial in the city of electric bike and scooters (the Voi scheme) authorised by the Department of Transport, managed by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). Legislation allowed extension to the trial which the CPCA Board would consider in October. The City Council met regularly with external partners concerning the Voi scheme which gave the council an element of control to the 50 e-bikes and 300 e-scooters. Information was shared on the number of accidents and issues reported. Accidents tended to take place on the street and not on open land with no hot spots reported.

There was currently no legislation allowing privately owned electric scooters on public highways, this was a police enforcement issue and was difficult to manage to the number of scooters.

Some City Council owned land had management plans which provided opportunities to look at issues that residents were experiencing. Would encourage residents to report these pinch points direct to the Council who could investigate what measures could be taken to improve the situation.

Councillor Nethsingha read out an update on the Voi trial provided by Officers at the Combined Authority:

- i. Top priority was safety of users and non-users of the e-scooter trial.
- ii. Voi scooters were operated within a geofenced area, which meant that no-ride zones could be implemented. There was a no ride zone on Midsummer Common with the exception of cycle paths.
- iii. Noted that there may be legislation coming forward regarding a new vehicle class to encompass privately owned e-scooters in addition to existing providers like Voi.
- iv. The Department for Transport (DFT) periodically ran Forums to discuss feedback from authorities who had e-bike / e-scooter trials taking place. The DFT noted it was more difficult for sanctions to be imposed on people using privately owned e-scooters compared with those using e-scooters as part of a formal trial.
- v. Anyone who witnessed someone using a Voi scooter in an anti-social manner was encouraged to report this to Voi. If an identification plate was provided to Voi then they could track down the responsible rider. Any rider found to have been involved in a serious incident or subject to three strikes would be banned from the service.

The Committee made the following comments:

- i. Hoped local MPs would feed into any legislation coming forward regarding e-scooters etc and also stated that they also had concerns regarding the mini e-mopeds.
- ii. Noted that it may be useful for local authorities to have a meeting with local businesses who used the e-mopeds for deliveries to see if usage could be managed.
- iii. Noted that a trial of driverless robots was currently being used for deliveries in Cambourne and that this may be useful for deliveries in the city.
- iv. Noted that Market ward had a lot of open spaces and that a lot of vulnerable people did not go out as they were worried about e-bikes / e-scooters.
- v. Expressed concern about legislation which may be brought forward regarding privately owned e-scooters and the impact this may have on the way in which operators currently providing e-scooters operate.
- vi. Also expressed concerns about e-mopeds and the risks these posed to residents. Commented that it would be helpful for the Police to comment on how they were responding to them at the next Committee. Questioned what legal category these vehicles fall into.

Councillor Gilderdale noted that she had discussed the issue of e-mopeds with the Police and that it was difficult to tackle these as they were easily available to purchase online. The Police had to have a reason to stop people. If the e-mopeds were confiscated, then the owner could just collect the vehicle from the Police station.

Action Point: Head of Environmental Services to convene a multi-agency meeting to consider the issues being raised around use of e-scooters / e-bikes / e-mopeds on open spaces, with the aim of agreeing some deliverable management actions.

Question 2.

I live in New Square.

It often happens that people wait in their car on the other side of the road in front of my house on the double yellow lines to pick people up. They keep their engines running for minutes. On many occasions my friend or I have asked drivers to turn off their engines while waiting. Some do - some don't.

Last month a man sat in his car for about 20 minutes waiting for his partner. I asked him twice to turn off his engine. He refused. He said he didn't know it was illegal to leave his engine running for more than three minutes.

Engine idling is illegal under Section 42 of the Road Traffic Act 1988

Living in New Square is a privilege. Having to put up with idling cars, which are noisy, illegal, polluting and intrusive mars this experience. It should be possible to prevent this behaviour, and in so doing make a real difference to the lives of residents, the lives of others in the vicinity and the environment in general.

What can the City Council, the County Council and the police do to stop this anti-social behaviour?

Councillor Gilderdale advised that City Council Officers had advised that the City Council did not have powers to deal with engine idling and that if drivers were breaking the highway code this was a matter for the Police.

Councillor Porrer commented that she felt signage may assist.

Councillor Bick commented that the City Council could acquire powers to deal with engine idling but thought the City Council had declined to do so. Noted it

was illegal for vehicles out of traffic but still on the public highway to leave their engines running.

The Head of Environmental Services noted that Planning colleagues had expressed concern regarding signage in the past due to New Squares' Conservation Area status. This could be revisited. Believed New Square had double yellow lines all the way round and the Police and the County Council could take enforcement action against those on double yellow lines.

Action: Head of Environmental Services to investigate the ability for the Council to acquire powers to enforce against engine idling. Would also look into what could be done regarding education about engine idling in conjunction with other Partners.

Question 3.

Asked if the Head of Environmental Services could address the issue of e-scooter parking that tends to drift over pavements.

Councillor Gilderdale responded that she was aware that this issue had been raised before and that Ward Councillors had been in touch with Voi about this issue. Thought going forward if Voi had a more permanent contract, they may look to have more signed spaces for their vehicles to be parked in and noted this is what had happened in other places for e.g. in Liverpool. Also noted that issues with stray Voi vehicles could be reported directly to Voi.

22/20/WAC Environmental Report

The Head of Environmental Services introduced the report covering the six-month period of February to July 2022.

Members welcomed and supported the work of the team over the period covered in the report and endorsed the continued efforts directed at fly-tipping which continued to be an ongoing issue. Concern was expressed at the closure of the Adam and Eve recycling centre and asked if it could be reported back to members why this facility had been shut.

Action: Head of Environmental Services to follow up with the Shared Waste Service why the recycling facility at Adam and Eve Street had been closed and Ward Councillors not engaged prior.

Next, the cleanliness of Hobson Passage was highlighted which was a magnet for anti-social behaviour and smoking shelter for those in the nightclub.

Requested if this issue could be looked at for additional cleaning and speak with local businesses.

Action: Head of Environmental Services to pursue additional cleaning programme and business engagement to address cleanliness and anti-social behaviour issue.

Finally a member asked whether there was a scheduled highway drainage and gutter cleansing programme to remove leaves and other vegetation on a regular basis. The Head of Environmental Services confirmed there was a routine city wide mechanical sweeper programme, but sometimes parked cars prevented access.

22/21/WAC Update on city centre recovery and on Jesus Green skatepark by Head of Environmental Services

The Head of Environmental Services reported that the lighting and CCTV on Jesus Green Skate Park was making good progress, both would be delivered in the autumn. A bench and bin would also be installed which would assist with the general management of the skate park.

Next, Members were advised on the city centre recovery that the footfall was close to pre pandemic levels and also a domestic market but some return of the international market.

Cambridge was recently voted the best medium size city for mini breaks by Which magazine which was now being used in marketing campaigns to attract further visitors and footfall.

The Combined Authority funded a capital programme to improve the visitor experience and improvements in the city centre which was close to completion. The programme included the purchase of two electric assisted tourism vehicles, a new website and the development of a new tourism app due to go live in October 2022.

Seating and tree planting was being installed into Peashill, additional lighting was being installed in various areas of the city.

The market square improvement programme was on-going.

Members raised concerns about the junction of Burleigh Street and East Road following the revival of the night-time economy and also asked if there were any further plans for additional secure cycle parking.

The Head of Environmental Services confirmed that the Greater Cambridge Partnership was looking at strategic cycle parking provision in conjunction with City Council Officers.

Action: Head of Environmental Services to explore the potential for CCTV camera provision at the junction of Burleigh Street and East Road.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm

CHAIR