

South Area Committee, 4 September 2023

Answer at the Chair's request to question asked by member of the public at the Committee's last meeting - by the Trumpington Residents' Association

There are two related but distinct parts to the question: (1) failure to stop misuse by drivers of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus's no through roads, and (2) driver behaviour including speeding on Addenbrooke's Road.

CAMBRIDGE BIOMEDICAL CAMPUS: NO THROUGH ROAD

The Cambridge Biomedical Campus's (CBC's) roads are not part of the public highway. They are private no through roads for the CBC's use only, which are being misused on a large scale because the CBC has failed and is failing to stop rat running by members of the public.

The relevant traffic regulation order¹ (TRO) bans through driving on the following roads: Robinson Way; Puddicombe Way; Unnamed Road – continuation of Puddicombe Way from its junction with Adrian Way to the main hospital access road at Hills Road; Dame Mary Archer Way; Francis Crick Avenue; and Adrian Way.

The only drivers allowed on these roads are "authorised users" of the services and activities located on the CBC, plus cyclists, emergency vehicles, public service vehicles, statutory undertakers such as water authorities, local authority services, universal service providers such as postal services, and directly related construction activities. No other driver is allowed to use the CBC's roads.

The CBC organizations responsible for enforcement are the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the development company Prologis. They are required by a condition of their planning permissions for the "Phase 2" expansion of the CBC to provide and operate efficiently an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system and notify the police of vehicles which use the roads as no through roads, i.e., as a rat run. [08/0521/FUL pursuant to 06/0176/OUT] The reason for the condition is "to discourage through traffic." On notification by the CBC, the police are responsible for issuing tickets to drivers who do not respect the no through road status of the CBC's roads. Based on the Association's extensive experience of this vexed issue, we are satisfied that if the police are notified of infringements, they will issue tickets.

When the TRO was updated to take account of the new Southern Fringe developments in 2017, an assessment of rat running on the Campus's roads was carried out. It found that approximately 1,680 vehicles travelled *each day* between two of the three main entrances to the CBC – Hills Road and Addenbrooke's Road - in less than ten minutes. This was used as a proxy measure for rat runs, the algorithm used by the ANPR system not being made public to avoid gaming of the system by drivers. If allowance is made for the third main entrance to

¹ The Cambridge Area G Consolidation Order Section 31 Prohibition of Driving Order.

the CBC, Robinson Way, it is likely that 2,000 or more drivers misused the CBC's roads *each day*.

Since the updating of the TRO in 2017, the police have published data on tickets issued for three-month periods (which do not coincide with quarters). So far, data has been published for 23 *three-month* periods. In 13 of those 23 periods *ZERO* tickets were issued by the police. The highest ever number was 203 and the average per three-month period was 36. The mismatch is huge. Clearly, the infringement algorithm will make allowances which reduce the potential number of tickets issued. But not by this much!

Yet we are aware that internally within the CBC assurance is being given that the ANPR system is "fully functioning and operational", whereas the opposite appears to be the case. Even after the recent brouhaha surrounding the relaunch of the system with electronic notice boards giving notice to drivers that the system was now operational, only 195 tickets were issued in the September to November 2022 period – which then fell to 14 in the three months from December 2022 to February 2023.

Though constrained by their role and responsibilities, reading between the lines, the police are also not convinced. In response to a Freedom of Information request from the Association to Cambridgeshire County Council, we were told the police,

"... say that the activations (notifications) are very sporadic... (and feel there is an issue with the cameras on site and / or the team (an ANPR company in Yorkshire) that send them to the Police. They have highlighted the issue on numerous occasions but matters don't improve. Ultimately, the Police can only enforce the activations they get sent." (Cambridgeshire County Council email reply, 19 January 2023]

The effects on the CBC's neighbours of the failure to enforce the TRO are significant. It creates a sense of driver impunity and encourages driving rather than use of public transport or active travel. As a result, it significantly increases traffic levels on neighbouring roads, for example on Addenbrooke's Road. It is important to remember that Addenbrooke's Road's official name is "Addenbrooke's Access Road". As reported at the time, the road -

"... is a new access-only road constructed between Hauxton Road in Trumpington and Addenbrooke's Hospital. The road, completed on 27 October 2010, permits the expansion of the Addenbrooke's site and gives access to the new southern developments." [Road Traffic Technology²]

Those of us who live nearby, as I do, know that many of the drivers using Addenbrooke's Road are using it as a shortcut – despite the No Through Road signs shortly after the Shelford Road junction and repeated thereafter. You only need to stand by one of the

² <https://www.roadtraffic-technology.com/projects/addenbrookes/#:~:text=The%20road%20has%20been%20built,hospital%20site%20is%20not%20allowed.>

entrances to the CBC for a while to notice that the volume of vehicles cannot be explained by the activities which take place on the CBC including the hospitals.

Importantly, the rat running also creates risk within the CBC, most notably for patients being carried by ambulances when traffic on the Campus's confined roads gridlocks at peak periods – also delaying the guided bus service which serves the CBC and relies on the CBC's roads.

The CBC is growing and its roads are fully required to accommodate the travel needs of the Campus's users – patients and their visitors, hospitals staff, staff of the research institutes and commercial life sciences research & development companies, and their visitors. The latest figures we have seen state that the CBC currently employs c.22,500 people, increasing to c.34,000 people when current developments allocated or under construction are complete - in addition to its current 17,000 visitors per day, a number that will also rise. Rat running has no place in this.

The first written reference to this matter in the Association's records that I hold goes back to 2016 and I know it was raised before that. It is long past time it was sorted out. And this is what we have said to the CBC in no uncertain terms and will continue to say. The responsibility rests squarely with the Cambridge University Hospitals Trust and Prologis – as well as the CBC collectively – and they need to be held to account.

ADDENBROOKE'S ROAD: DRIVER BEHAVIOUR & SPEEDING:

Residents who live alongside or close to Addenbrooke's Road experience aberrant driver behaviour on a regular basis. For example, the "boy/middle age racer" conduct of some drivers where traffic turns right on to Addenbrooke's Road eastbound from Hauxton Road (A1309)/M11/A10), where two lanes narrow to one with dangerous battles of nerves accompanied by horns of rage. It is also experienced, with an even higher level of risk, on the "run up" to the lights in both directions at the junction of Addenbrooke's Road and Shelford Road where frustrated racers use the outside turn right lane to race those in the inside lane competing for the one lane on the opposite side of the junction. Plus, the truly outrageous speeding and noise of some drivers and motorcycle riders, often but not always when the traffic is lighter.

And this in a residential area – with houses on both sides of the road after crossing Shelford Road towards the CBC, and on one side from Hauxton Road to Shelford Road. There are many children and young people living in these new developments.

Speeding is also a problem on the residential roads off Addenbrooke's Road including the Clay Farm "spine road" of Hobson Road and Lime Avenue; as it is on Hauxton Road to and from the M11. Inappropriately, there are still 40mph limits on Addenbrooke's Road between Hauxton Road and Shelford Road, and on Hauxton Road from the M11 to shortly before Trumpington High Street - which need to be reduced to 30mph. Traffic noise is also a problem – as also, we believe, is traffic produced air pollution, though it is not rated as severe by the City Council. The slow change to electric vehicles may help, though the seriousness of tyre particulates' effects on health, though not fully understood yet, is likely

to be serious.³ The high incidence of HGVs is also an important factor given construction activity on the CBC, Cambridge South Station and beyond the CBC.

An enterprising resident and TRA member who lives alongside Addenbrooke's Road carried out a week-long survey of vehicle speeds on Addenbrooke's Road in March 2021 using a fixed industrial radar system. This –

“... showed that, of outgoing vehicles on Addenbrooke's Road at the Hobson's Brook bridge: less than a quarter (23.5%) were obeying the speed limit; almost two thirds (63.5%) were exceeding it at Police Band C (51 mph and above); 11.7% were exceeding it at Band B (41 to 50 mph) ... The highest speed recorded was 79mph.”

The speed limit on this part of Addenbrooke's Road was 40mph at that time and was subsequently reduced to 30 mph, without noticeable change in behaviour to date.

These issues had been raised with the police at various times. Eventually, a speed survey on Addenbrooke's Road between Glebe Farm Drive and Trumpington Place was carried out in the latter part of 2021 over a full week for 24 hours per day. This reported:

“Eastbound traffic count approx. 47400 vehicles, average speed 37mph
Westbound traffic count approx. 30980 vehicles, average speed 40 mph
These figures evidence that largely there is compliance with the posted (40mph) speed limit.” [Police email dated 30 January 2022]

As averages are misleading in this context, the Association asked the police “To further assess the survey data which is expressed in the form of average speeds, it will be helpful to see data on the range of speeds observed during the survey week, with the highest decile and quartile, for example. Can we see this data please?” [TRA letter of 31 January 2022] In response, we were told that “sharing all the data is not something we would normally do, as quite often people will draw their own conclusions based on parts of the picture.” [Police reply of 10 May 2022]

On the advice of the police, a Freedom of Information request was then made on 1st July 2022, making clear that the highest decile and quartile speeds only were being asked for - noting “We know from the experience of our members that there is a considerable variation in the speeds at which vehicles are driven and that speeds tend to be higher in the evening and at night. Therefore, average speeds may not tell the whole story.”

The reply we received stated –

³ For example:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/243333/prioritise-tackling-toxic-emissions-from-tyres/#:~:text=Tyre%20wear%20particles,-We%20are%20growing&text=They%20are%20small%20enough%20to,metals%20like%20zinc%20and%20lead.>

“Following your request, searches were conducted at Cambridgeshire Constabulary for information relating to Addenbrooke’s Road. These searches failed to locate any records / documents relevant to your request. Accordingly, I have determined that Cambridgeshire Constabulary do not hold the information you have requested.”
[Letter, 29 July 2022]

This conclusion to our enquiries was unsatisfactory, if not extraordinary, as data of this kind should not be missing. Also, the data should have been provided at an earlier point, as standard survey packages can produce this kind of information readily including medians as well as deciles and quartiles which are essential to understanding survey data of this kind. Nevertheless, being a volunteer organization with other demands on time, we decided to pursue other priorities rather than making possibly fruitless further enquiries.

These problems remain undiminished, and some might say this is an accident waiting to happen.

David Plank

For Trumpington Residents’ Association
5th August 2023