



**Response to the Milton Road initial
consultation on better bus, cycling and
walking trips, from**

**MILTON ROAD
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

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Our Response to the City Deal Proposal

Collective Response to the initial consultation on better bus, cycling and walking trips on Milton Road

This response has been distilled by the committee of the Milton Road Residents' Association from statements made by people at public meetings and from many emails and on-line comments received over the previous weeks.

Introduction

We appreciate the quality of the staffing, both Council Officers and WSP personnel, at the numerous exhibitions which have been held around the area.

Reaction to the Proposals

The overwhelming feeling is that this is a deeply flawed scheme, starting from the concept of "The Milton Road Corridor" as a description of the place where we live. It fails the first assessment: "is it fair?" It clearly is not, since all the benefit would be incurred by those who live elsewhere; all the pain by the residents. And assessed against their own declared objectives these proposals do not rate well:

City Deal Objective	Objective Met By Proposal?
Bus priority in both directions	Yes
Additional infrastructure and capacity for sustainable trips	Not understood
Enhance the environment, street scene and improve air quality	Definitely not
Increase bus use and provision for new bus services	Probably not
Safer and more convenient routes for cycling and walking, segregated where possible	Safer for walking yes, but not for cyclists who will find themselves right next to buses
Maintain or reduce traffic levels compared to today's levels	No

Above all, there is no point in speeding the flow of buses and other traffic until there is somewhere for them to go once they reach the end of Milton Road.

We accept the need to do something and that non-stop buses need to transit Milton Road, but this must not be to the detriment of residents' lives; there must be real benefit for residents and road users.

What the Residents Want (endorsed at the meeting on 21 January)

- Preserve the environment, i.e. the trees, the green verges and the Elizabeth Way roundabout
- Safe walking on either side of Milton Road
- Safe cycling, fluid not necessarily fast
- Safe access to and from our homes
- Safe passage to all schools by foot and cycle
- Effective drainage of the roads when it rains
- Local buses that serve the residents
- Shops and businesses accessible on foot
- No attractive rat-runs for motorists
- Fewer commuter cars
- No commuter parking
- No counter-productive measures, e.g. traffic lights in lieu of roundabouts
- No unnecessary restrictions, e.g. permanent no-right turns, bus lanes, etc, when they are needed only at peak times.

Detailed Comments

- The trees however ancient are a loved feature of the road with strong emotional attachment; we accept that they might be better replaced by an avenue of younger, similar trees and the essential grass verges, relocated to form a barrier between cyclists and vehicles; however, there is an issue of trust caused by earlier failures to replace trees that had been removed.
- Bus lanes would stand empty for much of the time, so do not create them.
- Requiring/enabling bus tickets to be purchased in advance would greatly reduce delays at bus stops.
- The bus stops near Arbury Road/Union Lane junction add to congestion and need relocation; all others should be reviewed.
- Floating bus stops would be a disaster, creating mobile traffic jams when buses stop; plus the creation of high speed cycle routes beside them would soon lead to injured children/guide dogs on the crossings.
- There is insufficient space to give cyclists all that they demand, and high speed cyclists are part of the problem, so do not create high speed cycle lanes; where space allows give them enough width for two-way cycling on each side of the road; and alter priorities at side roads so that pedestrians and cyclists have priority over cars, thus allowing continuous steady cycling.
- The no right turn southbound at Arbury Road might be needed at peak times, if evidence justifies, but not at other times, so provide a time-controlled signal.
- The roundabout at the junction of MR and Elizabeth Way is essential both for its contribution to the environment and because it allows a U-turn for vehicles obliged to by-pass Arbury Road at peak times; it and the associated traffic islands could be reduced slightly in size to allow for two clearly marked traffic lanes; there is no need to close Highworth Avenue and, provided a two-way cycle route is maintained across the end of Highworth Avenue, dedicated cycle lanes are not needed elsewhere on the roundabout.
- The no right turn southbound at Gilbert Road seems entirely unjustified and would generate a lethal rat-run through Ascham Road/Gurney Way; however, the junction does require some realignment.
- The no left turn into Kings Hedges Road is not required if there is no bus lane northbound along Milton Road, which we suggest is not needed.
- Access to Chesterton must be considered as a whole, particularly the often-congested roundabout at the junction of Chesterton High Street and Elizabeth Way. Union Lane need not be closed for most of the time; doing so would provide a real problem out of hours for Urgent Care Cambridgeshire and at all times for refuse collection (have they been consulted?), emergency services, removals vans, etc; if evidence justifies its closure at all this should be limited to peak times only.
- Any essential restrictions require enforcement by a plentiful supply of cameras.

Many of the ideas proposed by Smarter Cambridge Transport seem sensible to us and should be considered with an open mind.

We believe that cars will remain preferable to buses for commuters until:

- On-road parking in Cambridge is eliminated (re-allocate to residents parking?)
- Availability of space in car parks is signalled to drivers while they still have the option of going to a Park & Ride and they are encouraged to do so
- Parking charges at Park & Ride are eliminated or amalgamated with bus fares

Conclusion

We encourage City Deal to be bold, to use modern technology to the full and to think beyond traditional engineering solutions. They should read the Institute of Economic Affairs Discussion Paper No. 68, 2016 (a brief summary is included below); we would welcome further investigation into the applicability here of that approach to traffic management. City Deal must also sort out the plan for traffic in the City Centre before making any major changes to the approach roads.

The Consultation Process

There are flaws in the consultation process: the plans on display are a different version to the ones originally included in the annex of the draft options report. A new set of technical drawings was published on 14 January, and this was while the consultation meetings were under way. Moving the goal posts, even a small amount, during the consultation period is quite inappropriate.

We also note that the consultants have totally failed to report on the impact of their proposals on existing residents, as required by their terms of references.

The failure to insist on a post code or address on the questionnaire makes it impossible to know what weight to give to the content since it could have been submitted from anywhere in the area, or indeed in the case of on-line responses from anywhere in the world.

However, we would not wish to challenge on any of these grounds if the eventual outcome were otherwise acceptable to us.

Appendix

***Institute of Economic Affairs Discussion Paper No. 68, 2016 Summary:**

(see <http://tinyurl.com/hzuqaks> for full paper)

Not only is a high proportion of traffic regulation detrimental to road safety, the economy and the environment, it also imposes huge costs on road-users, taxpayers and communities.

Despite the potential for social and economic harm, traffic regulation is introduced without analysing the full cost to road-users. All too often, policy makers neglect negative effects and approve schemes even when costs outweigh benefits....

There is a strong economic case for replacing standard traffic regulation with strategies that harness voluntary cooperation among road-users. 'Shared space' schemes – such as the one in Poynton in Cheshire (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vzDDMzq7d0>) – show the transformational benefits of this unregulated, design approach.

A high proportion of traffic lights should be replaced by filter-in-turn or all-way give-ways. Many bus lanes, cycle lanes, speed cameras and parking restrictions should also go. Culling such traffic management infrastructure would deliver substantial economic and social benefits.