

## Extracts from the HPERA submission to Cambridge City Deal

### Executive Summary (pages 5-6)

**There are major concerns from residents that the City Deal proposals will compromise safety, health and quality of life for residents, and lead to environmental degradation and pollution. Alternative proposals to achieve the City Deal's aims are suggested.**

#### Detail

Hurst Park Estate Residents' Association (HPERA), which represents around 450 households/1000 residents, has considered the City Deal Proposals carefully and has the following comments.

We support the broad aims of the proposals, and agree that residents and commuters should be encouraged to use public transport and bicycles instead of cars. However, we think the specific actions outlined in the proposals would have undesirable consequences for the local population, and that some of the underpinning assumptions are incorrect. We propose some alternative measures.

#### Specifically:

- Residents are extremely concerned that the proposed changes to routing around Milton Road will: increase traffic flow through the Hurst Park Estate, create rat-runs, and force detours for residents of one road (Highworth Avenue), compromising safety of residents and quality of life in the Estate, and causing environmental degradation; create rat-runs in other neighbourhoods (Ramsden Square, Lovell Road, Campkin Road), with similar consequences; increase the danger to children and parents on school runs on and around Milton Road as more vehicles access Hurst Park Avenue, Ascham Road and Gurney Way.
- The proposed road restrictions in the vicinity of the Hurst Park Estate and the rat-runs that will be created will lead to significant pollution and health hazards. In particular, the annual mass of greenhouse gas emissions will be of the order of 50 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e which is equivalent to the emissions attributed to 30 seats on trans-atlantic air journeys.
- The proposal to replace the Highworth Roundabout is flawed. Traffic on the roundabout currently runs smoothly for much of the day and it is attractive with a "country" feel, enjoyed not just by local residents. The proposed replacement traffic lights would delay traffic flow on Milton Road at all times of day, increase noise, pollution and energy use, and be unattractive. The argument that the roundabout is more dangerous for cyclists than traffic lights is not, in our view, sufficiently compelling. Accident statistics show clearly that this roundabout is not an "accident black-spot" and its removal is unwarranted on such grounds. Residents are strongly opposed to its removal, and suggest that modifications to the roundabout will meet safety concerns.
- The current proposal to widen the road to make a four-lane highway involves the removal of most of the trees, bushes and grass verges from Milton Road. This is not an acceptable state of affairs. We believe that cities should be planting more trees not destroying them.

- The lack of information about how an increase in bus traffic will be dealt with at Mitcham's Corner and the City Centre leaves the impression that Milton Road could become a bus-lane corridor without a destination.

**We suggest the following alternative measures to keep traffic moving:**

- Retain the Highworth roundabout, and make modifications to address safety concerns and improve traffic flow further (described in 5.2 p.21 and Appendix G).
- Abandon the no-right-turn into Arbury Rd measure and, instead, improve the safety of the existing junction by: moving the bus stops- one to north side of the junction along Milton Rd, the other to lay-by further south; implementing a right filter and improve the signal phasing.
- Extend the left filter on Milton Road approaching the Arbury Road lights to divert vehicles from the central lane earlier and reduce tailbacks.
- Abandon the no-right-turn measure for Milton Road south-bound at Gilbert Road and, instead, re-configure the junction slightly to north-west and re-implement a right-filter.

**To address the congestion problem generally we recommend:**

- Incentivise commuters to use existing and new P&R sites which are properly sheltered, free (or low cost) and are destinations in themselves – offering franchises for Car-Wash, mini-mart, collect+ parcel pick-up and so on.
- Incentivise bus use by implementing off-bus or cashless ticketing with extended service times to/from P&R sites.
- Press ahead with orbital bus routes and the idea for a new Addenbrookes rail station to connect with Cambridge North.

**Some dis-incentive strategies for consideration:**

- Mandatory pre-pay and booking for city-centre car parks – drivers on essential journeys are then guaranteed a space and others will no longer be cruising around and forming queues.
- Extension of parking restrictions into residential streets 1-2 miles out from the centre.
- Road charging at peak times for all road users (also to help subsidise P&R running costs)

HPERA stands ready to discuss these ideas, provide further evidence as required to support our arguments, and elaborate on our alternative suggestions.

---

## **Conclusions and Recommendations (pages 28-29)**

### **Specific to the Hurst Park Estate**

- **Arbury Road and Gilbert Road** contain important destinations needing vehicular access including a Primary School, Castle School, Care Home, Community College, Academy School,

Dentist, Veterinary Practice etc. The proposed traffic turn restrictions and road closures will result in **significant delays for cross-corridor traffic** around Milton Road, significant **inconvenience** to residents and commuters needing to navigate local streets by car, and an increase in danger to pedestrians, noise, **pollution** and energy usage. Additional greenhouse gas emissions are conservatively calculated at 50 tonnes **CO<sub>2</sub>e** per year which will be exacerbated by loss of trees and greenery.

**Recommendation:**

Proceed on the basis of 'doing least harm'. Make intelligent incremental changes at critical pinch points in the system as outlined in this report and measure the results, rather than embarking on major and irreversible road widening.

- **The rationale for the removal of the 'Highworth roundabout'** and its replacement with a traffic light system is twofold: i) a perception that roundabouts are more dangerous for cyclists than traffic light systems, and ii) that a traffic light system will better regulate the flow of buses through City environs, avoiding the delays at roundabouts. **In both cases, we believe that these justifications are flawed**, and that the proposal flies in the face of trends in other countries.

**Recommendation:**

Leave the roundabout in place but make modifications as outlined in this report to improve traffic flow further. In particular, install new cycleways and footpaths to accommodate the particular needs of cyclists and pedestrians. Allow the grass to remain and the flowers to blossom. Modifications at pinch-points up-stream and down-stream in the system should help to improve the passage of buses in this section.

- **Current options for Milton Road will be to the detriment of the public realm and environment.** Cities should be planting more trees, not getting rid of existing ones. They are the lungs of our community, provide an attractive environment and assist in cleaning up air pollution. Grass verges assist by providing natural drainage.

**Recommendation:**

Abandon ideas for a four-lane motorised highway. If smart, incremental modifications to the network fail to deliver the improvements required then consider a three-lane tidal flow arrangement.

## Not Specific to the Hurst Park Estate:

- Radial routes need to be upgraded but full-length dedicated bus lanes are not the answer. There is insufficient road width and some bus lanes are rarely occupied by buses. What is needed is priority when approaching and leaving junctions at peak times.

**Recommendations:**

Consider bus gating through smart signalling during peak hours. Outside peak times, road space should be shared by public and private vehicles.

- New cycle lanes should be segregated from traffic and pedestrians where possible and positioning of bus stops should take account of passenger's needs.

**Recommendations:**

Use the experience of Huntingdon Road where some cyclists prefer to travel in the 'wrong' direction on both sides of the highway rather than try to cross traffic lanes, risking collision with other traffic. There is anecdotal evidence of motor cyclists under-taking buses on Huntingdon Road by using the cycle lane. This should be banned and enforced by the police. The floating bus stops have not proved popular with passengers, can cause queueing and should not be implemented generally.

- More ambitious plans are needed to encourage commuters from outside the City to use public transport.

**Recommendations:**

Provide more P&R hubs further out from the city in convenient locations which are properly sheltered, low-cost and are destinations in themselves – offering franchises for Car-Wash, mini-mart, collect+ parcel pick-up and so on. Ticketing should be off-bus or cashless and service hours should be extended to cater for user needs. Note: the implementation of charges at the existing P&R sites resulted in 500,000 less passenger journeys per annum (-14%).

Provide better signage when drivers approach P&R sites to enable them to make a sustainable journey choice before embarking on a city-centre commute.

Press ahead with the idea for a rail station at Addenbrookes to link up with Cambridge North.

- More ambitious plans are needed to dis-incentivise drivers from entering the city.

**Recommendations:**

Encourage sixth- form colleges and private schools to start their day at 10.00am.

Introduce mandatory pre-pay and booking for city-centre car parks – drivers on essential journeys will then be guaranteed a space and others will no longer be cruising around and forming queues.

Extend parking restrictions into residential streets 1-2 miles out from the centre.

Consider road charging at peak times for all road users (would also generate income to subsidise P&R running costs).