

MILTON ROAD LOCAL LIAISON FORUM: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 12th September 2017

Time: 18.00-20:00

Place: Chesterton Community College, Rex Freeman Hall

Present: ***LLF Members***

County Councillor Jocelyne Scutt, Arbury (Chair),
City Councillor Gerri Bird, East Chesterton (Vice-Chair)
City Councillor Margery Abbott, East Chesterton
City Councillor Ysanne Austin, West Chesterton
City Councillor Nigel Gawthrop, King's Hedges
City Councillor Elisa Meschini, King's Hedges
City Councillor Kevin Price, King's Hedges
City Councillor Mike Sargeant, West Chesterton
City Councillor Martin Smart, King's Hedges
County Councillor Ian Manning, Chesterton
Charles Nisbet, Milton Road Residents Association
Michael Page, Hurst Park Estate Residents Association
Michael Bond, Old Chesterton Residents Association
County Councillor Claire Richards, Castle
County Councillor Damien Tunnacliffe, West Chesterton
Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership Officers and Consultants
Paul van de Bulk (PB), Project Manager
Andrew Walker, Communications Officer
Beth Durham (BD), Communications Manager
Neil Poulton (NP), Consultant - WSP

Apologies: South Cambs Councillor Anna Bradnam, Milton
City Councillor Peter Sarris, East Chesterton

1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Chair provided apologies from various LLF members unable to attend or arriving late due to other meetings being attended.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th June 2017 were agreed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

2. CHAIR'S UPDATE

Chair informed the LLF, since the last meeting, the design concept that had been created out of the 'DO OPTIMUM' option had been put to the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership Assembly and Executive Board. Officers had gone through all the options and most recommendations were accepted as they were, a few required minor alterations. This demonstrates that residents' ideas have been heavily involved in the design concept.

Chair advised that she was happy to run through this with anyone who wanted to see it.

3. LLF ENGAGEMENT PLAN (WORKSHOPS AND DESIGN GROUPS)

PB presented an overview of the project and put forward a proposal of planned workshops and detailed design groups that will enable the LLF to continue to input before the proposal goes to consultation.

PB recapped on the 6 key project objectives for those who had not attended previously. He confirmed that the GCP Executive Board, at their meeting on 26th July 2017, had agreed to:

- approve the Final Concept Design as the basis for detailed design work to commence and a business case be prepared prior to consultation.
- note that wherever highway space permits opportunities to adopt further aspects of the 'DO OPTIMUM' design, they will be taken as part of the detailed design process.
- support discussions with property owners to explore interest in a joint funding approach to improvements on land outside the public highway in the vicinity of local shops on Milton Road.
- supplement development of the scheme with further consideration of means of achieving modal shift to public transport.

PB outlined the key elements of design development going forward. He explained that The Final Concept design will now be refined into a preferred design and the GCP welcome the continued involvement of the LLF in the design process through workshops, detailed design groups and public meetings.

PB explained that an outline business case is required to enable the Executive Board to commit to expenditure on the delivery of the scheme. A key part of this is its Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR). For a successful BCR and to meet the scheme's objectives improvements to public transport reliability and journey times must be achieved. If this cannot be demonstrated, the scheme risks being unable to justify its funding allocation.

PB Outlined the three processes for LLF Design Engagement prior to the submission of the detailed design concept in March 2018

1) Workshops - these are to capture LLF views in design areas not yet discussed. They will consist of approximately 25 participants who will be divided into small groups, with facilitators, to work on the key deliverables to be achieved, which will be set out by an introductory presentation at the opening of the workshop.

- Bus Stops and Crossings Workshop: To look at the design and locations of bus stops and crossings.
19th Sept (evening), approx. 2hrs
WSP are preparing the materials for the workshop and invites have been sent out.
- Trees, Landscaping and Public Space Workshop: To look at tree type preferences, what attendees want from trees along Milton Road and the identification of public space opportunities.
3rd Oct (evening), approx. 2hrs
Council Tree officers and independent urban designer Kieran Perkins will advise.

2) Detailed Design Groups - these will be small (approx 10 participants) technical groups of experts in the area along with 1-2 LLF representatives and will focus on refining details rather than the broad concept.

- Elizabeth Way Roundabout - October
This will involve discussions with residents with direct access onto the roundabout to inform design. It will also look at the safety of existing access points, utilities in and around the junction and improvement of cycle facilities and planting.
- Mitcham's Corner - October
To consider how the Mitcham's Corner proposal will fit into the Milton Road programme and hence take this into design considerations and modelling the impact this will have on bus lane lengths.
- Cycle Lane Review between Mitcham's Corner and Elizabeth Way Roundabout - October/November
To review cycle lane position for safety and usability and identify tree planting opportunities on SE side of road between Gilbert Road and Elizabeth Way.
- Bus Lane Lengths - November
To review best practice for bus priority at junctions. Model impact of junction bus priority and final designs. Employ sensitivity testing for housing growth scenarios.

3) Public Meetings - Meetings open to anyone where a presentation will be given followed by a Q & A session.

- Workshop Outcomes - Nov/Dec
Results of the workshops and design groups will be presented to the wider LLF.
- Update on Latest Scheme Design - Jan 2018
Preferred design concept presented to LLF showing final concept design refinements.

PB concluded that the aim is to have reached a Preferred Option Design by early 2018 ready for the March Assembly and Board Meeting.

4. DISCUSSION

The Chair facilitated questions from the LLF and public which PB and NP answered

Q. Why can the bus lane lengths not be decided now?

A. Need to rationalise the decisions and factor in growth scenarios to understand junctions and their impact on queue lengths. Want robust analysis based on strong data plus the modelling takes time. It was noted that it is possible to reduce the length of bus lanes in the future but very hard to increase them. The outcome of the decisions on bus lane length will not affect the work conducted at workshops so there is no risk of needing to repeat a workshop. Bus lane length will be looked at, at the end of the process.

Q. Do the bus lanes need to be 24/7? Are they for revenue or traffic management as this will effect the answer?

A. The project needs to demonstrate bus reliability improvements in order to receive approval. This might mean that it does not need to be 24/7 but would need to consider how to sign and monitor specific time zones without too much street infrastructure.

Q. As the plan contains both bus lanes and cycle paths, can restrictions be placed on cyclists preventing them from using the bus lanes because they slow buses down defeating the object of the bus lane?

A. Signs can be put up but it is hard to monitor/enforce.

Q. What is modelling? Following on from the lack of need for a bus lane out of rush hour, could a video camera be used to record how often buses use the lane during non peak hours? Has data been collected in term time and holiday time?

A. Traffic surveys (automatic traffic counts; video surveys from cameras at junctions) have been done and the model built from this information. Data capture has only been done in term time as have to use a neutral (average) month. Modelling enables planning for the future and in this case takes into account the additional housing planned in Waterbeach.

As with all Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership projects the Cambridge sub regional model feeds into the model for this project. It predicts wider changes e.g. where employment might grow in the future, impact of changes in travel costs etc.

Q. PB and NP have stated that queuing at junctions impacts the length of bus lanes, what about using traffic lights further out to control flow from further back and hence reduce queuing?

A. The model considers traffic movement in the future from Waterbeach. Each junction will influence others with signals and these will work together. These can be phased daily and via IA influencing when they change.

Q. There have been suggestions that the bus lanes are open to all out of rush hour but what about on street parking in bus lanes as currently occurs between Gilbert Road and Mitcham's Corner?

A. Cameras could be used between certain periods and street signage used but this will require more on street infrastructure.

Q. Have you taken into account modal shifts? What is the current split between transports modes and has this been properly measured?

A. There is data for Cambridge as a whole from the 2011 census. These splits were not to hand to provide a percentage split. Cycle and pedestrian counts have been done. BD informed the meeting that a big engagement exercise is scheduled to begin w/c 25th Sept with South Cambridgeshire residents and commuters. It will look at the mode of transport they currently use, what incentive would be necessary to make them change or if they will never shift. This data will be used to supplement the census data and local surveys.

Q. The GCP have previously said that on-site parking would be looked at in a Workshop but there is no mention of it here in the Workshop programme.

A. An audit has been done looking at houses with no drive or drop curb. Intention is to contact those identified about parking requirements and then to look into side street parking and lay bys. Will be able to see the audit at the bus stops and crossings workshop.

Q. Should the design have just been created by residents?

A. The initial concept has been created by residents but now the design groups led by experts will refine this with reduced LLF input.

Q. Will the cycle lanes provide the most direct and quick routes for cyclists otherwise they will just use the bus lane?

A. Cycle lanes will be as effective as possible but ultimately it is very hard to police cyclists using the bus lane.

Chair informed the LLF that Chesterton Community College were keen for its pupils to talk to officers about the cycle paths and have some input.

Q. Will electric cars be allowed to use the bus lane?

A. This would require a central decision about bus lanes throughout Cambridge as would need to have a uniform decision.

Q. Looking at the timescales presented this evening, realistically what impact can the LLF or public have on the proposal at the later public meetings.

A. By the end of January the plan will be near completion and only small tweaks are likely to be able to be made however the design refinement will occur at the workshops which the LLF will influence and therefore there shouldn't be problems at the public meetings. People will be able to comment again when it goes to public consultation mid May to end of June.

Q. Are smart technologies being put into the models?

A. Yes where possible.

Q. It was stated that the data is accessible and open but have not seen evidence of this, where is it?

A. The first modelling is available online.

Q. Why isn't more of this activity advertised online? The workshop for next week isn't on the website.

A. The workshop for next week is being proposed at today's meeting so will go on the website tomorrow. Invites have been sent out too for the workshop.

Q. Are officers aware of the parking inspector plans for Chesterton Road? Can this project co-ordinate with the Chesterton Road one as it leads onto Elizabeth Way?

A. The Project manager has only recently been made aware of this and is looking into this possibility.

Q. Can the bus lane lengths be trialled?

A. This won't really be very useful as the plan is to look at the traffic flow to 2031 with the new houses that will then exist in Waterbeach.

Q. Can we ensure that there are no floating bus stops as these are not suitable for the elderly, disabled or parents with small children

A. This is the purpose of the workshop to assess different models. There will be a scoring system rather than a final decision being made.

Q. Can the events calendar from the old website be put on the new one as it is very hard currently to navigate around and to find documents for events?

A. BD affirmed that this could be done. The current website is the basic version and feedback is being collected now to improve it for its users. Councillor to speak to BD outside of the meeting.

Q. What is being done about Copenhagen crossings? The LLF would like to be involved.

A. Copenhagen Crossings will be an essential part of the final concept. Each side road will need to be looked at individually. This is a role for the engineers rather than the LLF. It is the technicality of how its delivered rather than where in the route.

Q. The bus stop and crossing workshop is on a weekday evening which means it may be hard for bus users to attend.

A. This has been a problem in the past however this workshop is by invite and hopefully some of those who chose to attend will be bus users. There will be further work later to engage with the bus users at the point of consultation. Transport hubs and advertising in buses will be used at this point.

Q. Can we scrutinise the data officers refer to prior to it being inputted into the model? This will provide confidence that the model is not being manipulated to show what the consultants or GCP want it to show.

A. Another consultancy has reviewed the data and modelling. WSP are following the Department for Transport process and guidelines so there is recognised quality control.

Q. Currently waiting for the results of a safety audit. Would it not be better to wait for the results to be published before the workshops are held?

A. This is just a first stage safety audit and the results are unlikely to be published they are more for the consultants to check that there are no major issues to the overall concept. WPS conduct internal safety audits throughout the process as well. There has been a consultation with residents who exit their properties on to Elizabeth Way roundabout and there are other safety audit stages.

Q. Should there not be a representative for bus users on the LLF?

A. There isn't really a group to ask for a representative. An LLF member suggested that they could speak to Andy Campbell of Stagecoach. Chair informed the LLF that MP Daniel Zeichner held a meeting recently for bus users so perhaps the LLF could contact him requesting details.

Q. Could a notice be put on bus stops that are to be discussed to get bus users views?

A. Yes this could be done however it does not have to happen in advance of the workshop.

Q. Will there be discussions about the traffic lights on the Elizabeth Way roundabout being turned off at certain times rather than being on 24/7?

A. The general design of the concept involves signals 'talking' to each other and adapting phasing depending on traffic build up so there are no plans to turn them off. The Signals Team at CCC do not support turning signals off. There could be a box to monitor traffic coming from the side roads that forces a change of light in quieter periods.

Q. Has cycle modelling been done for the Elizabeth Way roundabout?

A. Surveys have been done and the results are being taken account of in designs.

Q. In general does NP feel that turning traffic lights off would be beneficial as if so this should be taken to the Council?

A. No, as then they cannot communicate with other signals in the area.

Q. Are there any bus stop designs being put forward where there isn't full separation between road traffic and pedestrians and cyclists?

A. There are a number of option and these will be discussed at the workshop however the project team believe that they have already removed these designs, due to safety concerns, from the list of options to be put forward to the workshop.

Q. A Councillor was surprised that survey/modelling data and the safety audit were not being made public as they could probably be requested under FOI

A. The data and safety audit is not being concealed it was just felt that it didn't bring much to the process as by the time it is in the public domain it has already been incorporated into plans. If the LLF feel that it should be published the project manager will look to do so.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Introductions were not done at the beginning as several LLF members were going to be late. Chair asked all LLF members present to introduce themselves.

The Chair asked the LLF and members of the public to sign up for workshops or design groups on the forms at the back of the hall.

The Chair thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 8pm