

## FeCRA – The Federation of Cambridge Residents' Associations



**Grassroots civic voice - Effective network - Supporting communities - Channel for information- Voice of scrutiny**

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August 17, 2018

### **Greater Cambridge Partnership Greenways Consultation Haslingfield and Barton**

The Federation of Cambridge Residents' Associations (FeCRA) is a grassroots civic voice, dedicated to maintaining and enhancing Cambridge as a wonderful city in which to live, work, study and relax. Set up to give residents a voice on planning matters and to be a voice of scrutiny on the quality of life in Cambridge FeCRA now comprises nearly one hundred community associations and neighbourhood groups, including environmental & cultural/heritage groups<sup>1</sup>

Cambridge is a compact city with a village style of neighbourhoods, human in scale. Asked to describe what makes Cambridge special residents refer to the beautiful architecture of the historic

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<sup>1</sup> Member organisations include around one hundred residents' associations and other community groups such as the Friends of: Cambridge Library, Cherry Hinton Brook, Midsummer Common, Stourbridge Common, Sheep's Green, Ditton Meadows, Coldham's Common; Cam Valley Forum, Cam Conservators, Cambridge, Past, Present and Future, COPE, Cambridge Area Bus Users Group, Cambridge Living Streets, Cambridge Connect, CamCycle, Smarter Cambridge Transport and Transition Cambridge. We also have close links with the parish councils of nearby villages.

centre but they talk just as much about the pattern of open spaces, big and small they experience on a daily basis.

**The Greenways Project** aims to ‘create a walking, cycling and equestrian travel network made up of 12 routes that will link local villages and Cambridge’ and will support the modal shift in transport that many residents want to see and offer other benefits in terms of green infrastructure, place making and eco systems.

FeCRA is therefore very supportive of the great opportunity the Greenways project provides for funding to tackle the really dangerous issues for cyclists, and we welcome the appointment to this project of a local design studio which understands the context of the area. We also strongly support the commitment made to the integration of a maintenance budget so that paths, trees and verges can be kept in good condition

However, residents have expressed a number of concerns about the two Greenway schemes being proposed.

- The routes have been designed without any reference to the origins and destinations survey currently being conducted by GCP.
- The ‘spoke and wheel’ model adopted for the Greenways takes no account of the fact that many people’s daily destinations, will not primarily be in the city centre but at the West Cambridge Site, the Science Park, Addenbrookes, the Biomedical campus etc The Greenways routes now being scoped, that deliver thousands of cyclists into the city centre, are not evidence-based
- Destinations bear no relation to employment. For instance, directing people to Mill Lane makes little sense in this context, especially as the redevelopment proposal for that area is for predominantly residential and leisure use.
- The routes are being developed separately from work on the City Centre Spaces and Movement SPD, even though both these projects are funded by the GCP.
- All routes lead into a crowded city centre - the delivery of thousands of commuter cyclists into a crowded and fragile medieval city centre with delicate pinchpoints would be both damaging and counter-productive At the recent City Centre Spaces and Movement Stakeholders Workshop Alan Hennessy and Matt de Costa, the urban designers from BDP advising on the development of the City Centre SPD, stated that the evidence to date had identified severe competition in the City Centre for space for all modes of travel.

- The issue of city centre capacity and pinchpoints was also raised at the GCP Board meeting by FeCRA concerning the Greenways consultants' report and Senate House Passage. The issue of historical environment capacity was raised again at last year's Greenways seminar by both John Preston, Cambridge City Council's former Historical Environment and Conservation Manager, and by Charles Crawford of LDA, the consultancy which worked with the Councils on the Cambridge Local Plan.
- The Haslingfield and Barton Greenways both end at Lammas Land – where do they go then? The original brief has them going across Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, and Laundress Green, all places where the fact cows still freely wander just five minutes away from the city centre, attracts worldwide admiration<sup>2</sup>. The medieval open spaces of Cambridge have been likened to the best art of the Fitzwilliam Museum, and residents are very strongly opposed to any encroachment on them. We are very concerned about the destination of both these routes – delivering large numbers of cyclists to the Barton Road/Grantchester Street junction looks like an intention to create pressure that will turn a number of Cambridge's iconic open spaces into transport corridors.
- The proposed Haslingfield option 8 has a new cycleway immediately adjacent to Grantchester Meadows, which would inevitably have an impact on the ecology. landscape and views there and will face widespread opposition.
- In addition, the route goes through the centre of both Grantchester and Newnham. The consultation leaflet states that, 'Feedback on the engagement carried out for the Haslingfield Greenway suggested that separation between the Greenway users and motor traffic is a high priority', yet Route 8 is completely at odds with this. Grantchester village and Newnham Croft are both congested areas with narrow streets and a considerable amount of traffic, so cannot become safe routes for cyclists, who would be slowed down and brought into unavoidable conflict with other users.
- Land ownership and environmental issues have not been declared or dealt with. No distinction has been made between places where there are already permissive footpaths for walkers and cyclists and those where there are currently no footpaths, which may require land acquisition and raise environmental concerns.
- While individual sections have been costed, the overall cost of complete interventions is not given, and nor is the number of people who would benefit made clear. In order for the public to make a rational evaluation of the options, we need clear data on costs and **usage**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/15/world/europe/cambridge-england-cows.htm>

- The Benefit to Cost Ratio evaluation should be applied to all of the options, as is required for other transport interventions, and this needs to be communicated so that a proper evaluation can be made by the public.

## **Summary**

In conclusion while FeCRA strongly supports the aims of the Greenways in general, this project runs the risk of repeating the mistakes of previous GCP ventures, with the brief already written before any evidence is sought. The current plans show a lack of strategic thinking in the wheel and spoke model which brings everything in to the city centre when what is needed are orbital routes to the major places of employment.

Members are now expressing very strong concerns that they feel this project is being rushed through in an attempt to spend central government money and enable GCP to get approval from the Gateway Review

The scope of the present and future destinations should be reviewed, enlarged and changed in the light of the origins and destinations survey that GCP are conducting and an evidence - based approach should be taken before any final decisions are made. There is otherwise a very real danger that sticking to the original brief to get a few 'quick wins' will undermine support for the greenways as a whole.

Wendy Blythe (Chair)