

Abbey Green Party - Ward Office
603 Newmarket Road
Cambridge
CB5 8PA
19th March 2023

Dear Eastern Access Project team, Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership ,

Re: Eastern Access Consultation 2023

I am writing in my capacity as City Councillor for Abbey ward.

Regarding the aims of the scheme, I strongly support those that seek to improve the green space on Newmarket Road; to provide better connections by improving existing, pedestrian crossings and providing new ones; to enable people to change to walking, cycling and public transport rather than using private cars; to provide improved bus stop facilities and bus priority measures and to enable increased levels of walking and cycling by residents living along Newmarket Road. However, I question the sustainability of planned developments such as Marleigh and Cambridge Airport in the absence of resolution of the extreme water shortage facing Cambridge, although, should development occur, I support high quality denser housing with plentiful green space above sprawling settlements and encroachment of the Green Belt.

I have ordered this consultation feedback from west to east; by feature.

Newmarket Road / Elizabeth way underpass up to junction with River Lane (Landscape drawing sheet 1):

Newmarket Road / Elizabeth Way Junction: I am a regular and frequent user of this underpass as a cyclist and a pedestrian. I am an able-bodied person who uses a normal bicycle. My personal experiences of this piece of infrastructure are very positive and have been through the many years I have used it.

However, I am aware, following discussion with users of mobility scooters and manual wheelchairs, that this infrastructure is not suitable for them. Specifically they have noted that the angles are too sharp and the slopes too steep, with the result that mobility scooter users can get stuck in the underpass. I also understand that this infrastructure is not suitable for certain bikes, e.g. cargo bikes due to the tight turns. I also understand that some residents, particularly women, have significant public safety concerns about using the underpass.

I therefore support a new junction design to make this area inclusive to a wider range of residents.

I support the proposal for a cyclops junction with cycling and walking given priority and improved green space for amenity around the road.

I would particularly highlight the public artwork (murals) in this site and request that small sections of them are retained and donated to a local history organisation or archives, such as the Museum of Cambridge. I would also highlight the importance of public art for place-making as part of the ongoing development of

these plans. For example, plant selection and tree selection could be different in each corner of the roundabout to contribute to place-making.

Abbey Road / Newmarket Road Junction (pedestrian / cycle junction only): The south section of Abbey Road where it joins the junction could particularly benefit from improvements to the public realm, which I believe this proposal will achieve.

Newmarket Road West of Newmarket Road / Elizabeth Way junction: I object to the proposed dashed “advisory” cycle lane on the section of Newmarket Road to the west of Newmarket Road / Barnwell Road roundabout as this does not represent as good an active transport offer in terms of providing a safe route for cyclists.

Abbey Street / Newmarket Road Junction: One negative is the lack of a right turn for cyclists who wish to travel up Abbey Street and turn right, and I ask that further options are looked into to allow cyclists to turn right from Abbey Street. Alternatively I would ask that it is clearly signposted to say “No Right turn” and at the Abbey Street / New Street junction there is a bike sign which reads “Newmarket Road Eastbound” so bikes can travel to Coldham’s Lane and then use the crossing there.

Godesdone Road Junction: There is a current problem which is that car parking is permitted too close to the junction of Godesdone Road and Newmarket Road junction. I ask that parking on the south end of Godesdone Road is considered as part of the Eastern Access project / funding so that local ward councillors do not have to choose whether to prioritise for example, a short section of double yellow lines amongst many valid similar projects ward-wide.

River Lane / Coldham’s Lane Junction: This is currently a junction where many cars jump the lights. It is also (with its present layout) highly dangerous for cyclists. The new design proposed is safer for pedestrians and cyclists although it still appears complex to navigate for motor vehicle drivers.

Newmarket Road Retail Park entrance to Railway Bridge (Landscape drawings 2):

I support the design for floating bus stops and proposed crossings. Improvements of green landscaping detailed will also be welcome features. Should the trees opposite Stanley Road be lost (they are marked orange indicating they are hoped to be retained), this would be a major loss for public amenity in the area.

Newmarket Road Railway Bridge to Quinton Close (Landscape drawings 3):

The retention of the central reservation opposite Swans Road without the addition of landscaping represents a missed opportunity and this site would benefit greatly from the addition of low level green landscaping.

The choice to use a cycle path with dotted line immediately to the east of Ditton Walk is highly regrettable as this is markedly less safe for cyclists. This should be changed to match the rest of the road, and the bus stop converted to a floating bus stop on both sides.

A clear plan for pavement parking needs to be set out as this work proceeds - there are many spots on this map which will be very attractive to an attendee of Cambridge United wishing to park for free and without good enforcement powers and robust enforcement this may prove problematic.

The green landscaping between Ditton Walk and Quainton Close will be a welcome addition to the road. Of note, there are very few trees proposed for this section and I request the addition of more street trees into the green landscaping areas which do not have any. Another major problem in this whole area is verge parking and any changes will need to ensure this is prevented via either infrastructure or enforcement powers.

Whitehill Road junction: It appears that there is not pedestrian priority given to crossing this road, as is shown in other roads, therefore this should be amended to be in keeping with the other side roads.

Newmarket Road Quainton Close to Ditton Lane (Landscape drawings 4):

Barnwell Roundabout: Currently numerous residents face problems due to the Drive-through McDonald's, namely queues which backup and prevent them accessing or exiting their houses in a timely fashion when travelling by car, bus or taxi. Similarly, anti-social driving is regularly observed outside McDonald's related to cars waiting in the queue or attempting to bypass the queue. Although there is a short section of queue for McDonald's shown on the plan, when this area is filled with cars this may result in vehicular standstill for the whole roundabout as cars wait to enter.

I question the design of a floating bus stop just to the east of Newmarket Roundabout and within the "go straight / turn left" lane, given that this will prevent any cars from turning left or going straight whilst a bus is picking up at what is likely to be a very busy stop. Could some width be added from the space on the south side of Newmarket Road at this exact point to prevent this conflict?

Status of cycle path south of Barnwell Roundabout: I just wish to detail here discussions held between myself and the GCP and County council which resulted in agreement to change via TRO the status of the "service road" widely known to residents as a "cycle path" on the west side of Barnwell Road throughout its length, although it is not a cycle path legally. I am grateful to GCP and county officers for agreeing that they will put this forwards under TRO to become a cycle path as part of Eastern Access proposals.

Westbound bus stop: It is my opinion that the distance between the new and improved local centre and the closest westbound bus stop (between Malden Close and Quainton Close) is further than is ideal, and it would be much better to have the bus stop closer to the local centre.

Junction with Ditton Lane: The addition of toucan crossings is welcome here, and the improvement for cyclists appears significant. I think the design for cycle bypass opposite Ditton Lane is very good.

Newmarket Road Ditton Lane to Meadowlands Road (Landscape drawings 5):

The loss of mature hedgerow outside Newmarket Road service area is unwelcome. Is there any design that can preserve it? Should its removal be necessary, can local residents opposite be specifically consulted on their preferences regarding some kind of shield such as temporary green trellis pending new hedgerow reaching the same height?

Similarly the loss of trees on the south side approaching Meadowlands Road is unwelcome and I question whether it is necessary for all to be lost, given that they are located in what is mapped out as green landscaping. If not, I propose that residents of the nearby houses are approached and offered free trees of suitable species to plant in their front gardens, with the proviso that they are given tree protection orders, to eventually provide some of the benefits that the current threatened trees were providing.

Relocation of the Park and Ride site:

I have concerns about the relocated and expanded Park and Ride site due to the loss of green belt, and the proximity to a site of special scientific interest. All the sites considered, are all on green belt which is a negative for all options listed.

Between Concept Design Option A and B, my preference is Concept Design A due to the potentially quicker access that buses will have to then head down Newmarket Road.

General Comments regarding Trees along Newmarket Road (not location specific):

Following discussion with Jo Baker at the GCP I understand that trees marked in red are to be removed, those marked in orange are to be retained unless serious damage is done to their roots which renders them unsafe, in which case urgent felling will be required. I am aware that huge numbers of residents place a huge value on mature street trees, as do I, and I ask that senior managers are present during work close to large and mature trees to ensure none are felled in error and that close attention is paid to avoiding accidental damage.

General Comments regarding Buses (not location specific):

A major current limitation to travelling by bus is the poor reliability of bus timetables as well as the timeliness of buses in operation. Other concerns raised include cost. This has been focussed on in other consultations but I strongly support the need to improve bus services both in and around Cambridge to give people more transport options.

General Comments regarding Accessibility (not location specific):

All toucan and pedestrian crossings should be fully accessible to people with disabilities, and toucan crossing should be accessible for disabled cyclists.

General Comments regarding Street Furniture (not location specific):

It is not clear from engineering drawings what street furniture is present and in situ. I am making the assumption that all street furniture will not impact the usable footpath width at any point, however, if it does, then the landscaping should be redesigned to provide 2m width at all points along the road.

General Comments regarding Cycle Path width (not location specific):

The cycle path should comply with LTN 1/20 throughout its length. The width of the cycle path after Ditton Walk (going eastbound) does not fulfil this requirement, to clarify it is my view that this width should be achieved throughout the entire length of the road.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Hannah Charlotte Copley,

Abbey Ward City Councillor, Green Party