



MILL ROAD - A
STREET FOR PEOPLE

8th February 2022

To: Greater Cambridge Partnership

Mill Road consultation: ensuring an effective and inclusive process

A joint open letter from the above three groups.

We welcome a new round of consultation on improving Mill Road. Whilst we recognise that there are different views about how Mill Road could see improvements to safety, attractiveness of trade and an improved environment, we all agree the consultation must be carried out in an effective, fair and inclusive way.

However, we do have some concerns about the process currently being put forward.

With regard to the focus groups, we would like to understand the process better. In particular:

- What exactly are the hoped-for outcomes?
- Why is it necessary for the meetings to be so long?
- What process will you be using to select participants?
- Who will be presenting to the focus groups and what topics will be discussed?

To be more specific:

1. Outcomes

If people are being asked to give up several hours to the process, it is important that they fully understand its function.

Can you explain more about how the outcomes of the workshops will feed into the rest of the consultation?

2. Length and the dates of the focus groups / inclusivity

We are concerned that a five-hour online meeting:

- excludes many shopkeepers, who have limited flexibility, particularly since both are scheduled for trading days.
- excludes many people who have childcare responsibilities.

- excludes anyone with religious commitments to pray at particular times of the day.
- excludes people with no – or only limited – internet access.
- excludes children, whose safety on Mill Road is as important as anyone else.

Even people such as office workers, many of whom are used to spending long periods working online and who may have much flexibility, would regard a five-hour online meeting as a significant burden.

3. Selection of participants

You have said that 48 people will be invited to the workshops.

If more than 48 people apply, how will you ensure a good balance of stakeholders? Will you check that people who have said they are members of particular groups really are? And conversely that people who claim to be unaffiliated are also being truthful?

Interest groups should have an opportunity to present their views directly

In addition to the points raised above, we believe that interest groups should have an opportunity to present their views separately and directly, and we would like your reassurance that this will be possible.

Over the last year, it has become clear that there are a small number of local interest groups who have come to be recognised as representative of particular opinion about Mill Road.

We ask that those groups, which should include the MRTA, Camcycle, and MR4P, should each be offered the opportunity to give a presentation of their views to the project team. This could be in the form of 30-minute presentations, followed by 30-60 -minute Q&A discussion. This would ensure there is a proper opportunity for detailed understanding and scrutiny by the project team of the policies of these groups, whose positions cannot reasonably be expressed within half-minute snippets in more general consultation sessions.

We believe it would be appropriate for these groups to give presentations, since they have made significant efforts to organise and sign up members over a significant period of time.

The videos of such presentations would be published, to avoid any suggestion of 'secret' lobbying. This would also ensure that views and facts presented can be scrutinised by members of the public and by decision-makers.

Yours sincerely,

Camcycle
(Cambridge Cycling
Campaign)

Mill Road
Traders' Association

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