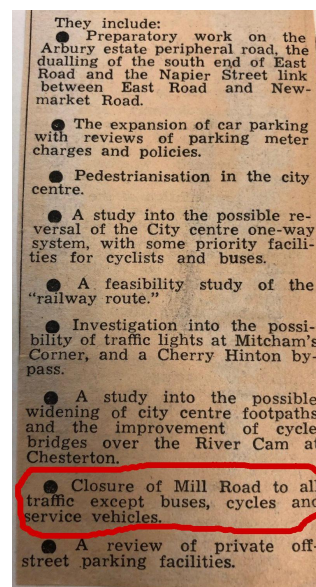


## Mill Road - A Street for People:

### Response to the GCP Mill Road Consultation

This document is Mill Road 4 People's formal response to the GCP Mill Road Consultation conducted between February and March 2022.<sup>1</sup>

We are pleased that CCC and the GCP have undertaken the first consultation, and with the measures that the GCP has taken to encourage wide participation. However, while we appreciate that the consultation must be robust and as inclusive and representative as possible, we were surprised that the main question was *whether* traffic should be reduced on Mill Road; we were hoping that this first stage of the consultation would provide people with some ideas of *how* traffic might be reduced.<sup>2</sup> Traffic on Mill Road has been a much-discussed problem since the 1970s (as the illustration, right, shows). We have already presented evidence of [overwhelming support](#) in both Romsey and Petersfield for traffic reduction,<sup>3</sup> and, despite the [enormous problems](#) with the County Council's last survey,<sup>4</sup> the results were nonetheless in favour of keeping even the controversial bus-gate as a means of reducing traffic.



Cambridge News, 1973

With these data in mind, and given the City, District and County Councils' climate strategies,<sup>5</sup> we were disappointed that the first proposal in your survey ("Theme 1") was to 'do nothing'. [Mill Road is the most dangerous road in Cambridgeshire](#), with many accidents occurring particularly on and around the bridge; you have a moral duty to act. We are also concerned that reliance on a 'city-wide plan' could lead to inaction, and we would like to reiterate the County Council Highways Committee's agreement that because of its unique characteristics, the positive transformation of Mill Road can precede the transformation of other areas and should spearhead the city's traffic strategy: indeed, the consultation [was expedited](#) in order to effect this.<sup>6</sup> A city-wide strategy of traffic reduction and modal transport shifts is laudable; it needs to start somewhere, and there is no better place to start than Mill Road. A successful transition to a greener and safer Mill Road would make transforming the rest of Cambridge an easier task.

<sup>1</sup> [Mill Road Consultation spring 2022](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Tv-s8i6lGDwY8wxByjKDArBSPOCO5yH/view?usp=sharing>

<sup>3</sup> [What do residents think? - Mill Road - A Street for People](#); [More residents' views - Mill Road - A Street for People](#)

<sup>4</sup> [How pro-car extremists cheated a Cambridgeshire Consultation and Won – Conservative Friends of Cycling](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/9581/climate-change-strategy-2021-2026.pdf> ; <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/climate-change-energy-and-environment> ;

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/zero-carbon-strategy-and-action-plan/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1713/Committee/62/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

We believe that you cannot 'improve the quality of place' (theme 2) without reducing motorised traffic, and therefore theme 2 is dependent on, and not separate from, theme 3. Whilst it is possible to install Copenhagen or zebra crossings as things stand, it is not possible to provide more places to stop and rest, more cycle parking, more e-bike and e-scooter hire and to affect changes to vehicle parking and loading without reducing the volume of traffic - simply because there is no room on Mill Road (especially in the Petersfield half). At the moment, there is no space for delivery and blue-badge parking: deliveries are forced to park on double yellow lines and pavements, and disabled parking is very limited. It is vital that Mill Road ceases to become a through-route, and becomes, instead, local access: in this way, we can reduce traffic enough to enable streetscaping. Furthermore, with much-reduced traffic, streetscaping would have the freedom to be flexible and long-term - and it could involve various agents. The parklets that appeared during the 2019 bridge closure were inspired and created by local residents and traders, at little or no cost to the councils; co-operation between councils and locals would benefit everybody.

We would like to see the hierarchy of road networks included as part of the consultation. We note that in the current draft hierarchy of road networks, Mill Road has been labelled as a blue 'local area access' street.<sup>7</sup> The definition of this sort of street is one which is 'used by all classes of vehicle and [is] not subject to restrictions on access other than where a suitable alternative route of a higher or equal status is available.' We believe that there are alternative routes, such as the 'primary distributors' of Hills Road and Coldham's Lane - but we would like to point out here that the feared traffic displacement to these primary distributor roads as a result of the bus-gate [did not persist beyond the first few weeks](#).<sup>8</sup> Mill Road does not have some 'typical place characteristics' for being a 'local area access' street:

- Mill Road is not wide enough to 'provide some level of segregation of pedal cyclists from other motorised traffic by the appropriate allocation of space including the provision of cycle lanes.'
- There is little space for 'designated on-street parking'.
- There is no room to 'mitigate the impact of passing traffic on the green open space', as lengths of Mill Road are too narrow with through traffic for any green space.

We think that Mill Road is more accurately a *civic street*: it is a narrow street, reflecting 'patterns of development that have grown up over time', and is a 'key shopping, tourist and leisure street where pedestrian footfall is at its greatest'. Mill Road can be viewed better as a destination, and the annual Mill Road Winter Fair, which sees the complete closure of Mill Road, has demonstrated how popular a destination it can be without traffic. For it to be categorised as a civic street, traffic reduction is a necessary precondition. Since the hierarchy of road networks is so relevant to the future of Mill Road, we are disappointed that it was not mentioned in the first part of the consultation, and would like to see it appear in the second part.

In theme 3 (traffic restrictions) in the consultation document, it is stated that 'further technical work would be needed to look at the detail of what could be put in place before we

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<sup>7</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yckwyb7r>, p.50.

<sup>8</sup> [traffic displacement: myth or reality? - Mill Road - A Street for People](#)

could consult on specific proposals.' These proposals will, we hope, be the second half of the consultation. If so, we think those proposals should deliver the restriction of Mill Road to through traffic, and include the prevention of rat-running through side streets in south Petersfield (for example, Tenison Road) and in Romsey (for example, Catherine Street). As Mill Road is used as a cut-through at all hours of the day (and night), restrictions should be in force all of the time. Specific proposals must also consider different solutions for restricting traffic. Whilst the bridge may be a simple restriction for a council to implement, it is not the most convenient restriction for traders and residents. (Even so, we found that more than half of residents supported the bridge restrictions.) Cameras at carefully-chosen entrances and exits to Mill Road could stop it being used as a through-road while giving shoppers and residents access to the length of the road. A number of different options would be helpful. See [one example here](#).

We very much hope that the second half of the consultation can be delivered efficiently and quickly and that real, meaningful changes to Mill Road will be in place as soon as practically possible and certainly by this time next year.