

## Response to GCP road classification consultation

### on behalf of the Bursars' Planning Sub-committee for the Colleges of the University

This response has been compiled after consultation with the Bursars of the 31 matriculating Colleges and the affiliated Theological Institutions of Cambridge University. It is submitted by the Planning Sub-committee of the Bursars' Committee. Collectively we represent over 5,000 employees and c.2,000 College Fellows.

Colleges are generally supportive of proposals to improve air quality and environmental conditions within the City (as evidenced by our positive response to the City Access consultation in December). However there are very significant concerns within Colleges about the effectiveness and fairness of this indicative proposal. In particular we are concerned at the absence of credibly assembled, neutrally presented empirical evidence underpinning these proposals. We strongly encourage the GCP and other bodies to use the coming period to assemble rigorous, publicly available, neutrally compiled data to inform debate and policy proposals. We look forward to engaging with the City and County Councils, the GCP and all relevant stakeholders as these proposals evolve. We also look forward to discussing what type of "modal filters" are envisaged at each point of intervention. Concerns reflected by Bursars on the basis of the proposed network hierarchy as outlined in the slide pack presented by Rachel Stopard and Richard Preston to us on 24 May include the following:

- The yellow "civic streets" area covers one of the most intensive and high quality educational spaces in the country where c.4,000 College Fellows and employees work. While the proposal emphasises leisure and entertainment within the area, we are disappointed and puzzled that no mention is made of this area's crucial role in employment and education. Access for those involved in delivering educational, maintenance, catering and other College services is essential and appears to have been largely forgotten in these proposals.
- The proposals as currently laid out contain very limited restrictions on vehicle movements in and around the Grand Arcade and the associated car park, which create immeasurably worse pollution and congestion problems within the City than the relatively light volumes of traffic in the "Civic Streets" area. What evidence has been collected in respect of traffic volumes, pollution levels and civic impact to justify such strongly differential treatment whereby low volumes of traffic and pollution are penalised far more heavily than the most polluting traffic structure in the City/region ?
- It is unclear what benefits could be derived from such a plan in relation to the yellow shaded area that would not be achieved more simply and cheaply by fixing the inoperative bollards across the central area which have been permitting free access to City centre streets for over two years due to lack of maintenance. Before any measures are introduced we would expect these bollards to be fixed and evidence gathered over a meaningful period as to the impact of this measure on traffic volumes within the area.
- Consideration needs to be given to student movements at the start/end of term. These are crucial moments in the year where vehicular access to places of residence for thousands of families carrying substantial luggage is essential.

- Exemptions for electric/plug-in hybrid vehicles would send important messages on prioritising air quality and act as catalysts for further investment by Colleges. In any case the multi-site, 24 hour nature of College operations will necessitate free movement for maintenance vehicles.
- On Grange Road (site of operations for 10 Colleges) we remain unclear as to the intention of restricting access as an “Area access street”, effectively turning the Road into two cul-de-sacs. The purpose of this proposal continues to be as mysterious as two years previously when a workaround was arranged with Richard Preston which forestalled a similarly restrictive and evidence-free proposal. Both proposals appear to originate in a motivation to restrict through traffic between Barton and Madingley roads which no analysis has shown to exist. Again rigorously compiled evidence will be useful to determine the relevance of this restriction. Similar concerns apply to the intention of restricting access to Victoria Avenue, which was also not taken forward two years’ ago.
- Employee safety for those working late shifts is a very strong consideration for Colleges. We welcome the City Access proposals to improve bus services and consider that any road hierarchy proposals should only come into force once the bus service to outlying areas is improved as outlined in last December’s consultation.
- The conference and events business is fundamental to the City’s economic recovery and for Colleges whose finances have been damaged by the pandemic. Such business is very dependent on acceptable vehicle access to conference sites.
- The recent freight consolidation survey failed to take into account the benefits currently arising due to collective purchasing of food and other resources by the Colleges which already reduces the number of servicing and supply trips in the central zone significantly, especially for catering supplies. The Colleges had therefore disengaged from the survey, having tried to articulate why the methodology was flawed several times. A more realistic survey would be required to inform any future proposals and we look forward to engaging with a fact gathering exercise which embraces both commercial and educational users and is sophisticated enough to model current behaviour accurately.
- Colleges are places of residence for a number of Fellows and Heads of House. Many of these individuals have restricted mobility. Appropriate in-house parking arrangements are essential for their mobility.
- College chapels are places of public worship. Many of the congregation are mobility impaired. Again, appropriate parking arrangements (which can be largely in-house and off road) are essential.
- The proposals also need to consider resilience of the network in the face of roadworks and accidents. It is not clear that much thought has currently been given to this critical aspect of

network management, as a number of Local Councillors have recently made clear. Ultimately rigid network restrictions which generate avoidable congestion whenever there are roadworks or when collisions/accidents occur will do greater environmental damage. This is illustrated by the air quality issues with which the local community (including Pembroke, Peterhouse and Downing Colleges) contends arising from congestion around the Grand Arcade car park.

Tim Harvey-Samuel, Chair

On behalf of Bursars' Planning Sub-Committee