

18th July 2022

University of Cambridge Consultation Response

A new road classification for Cambridge

Please see below the University of Cambridge response to the new road classification for Cambridge consultation. The University's responses are highlighted in **red text**.

Questions and responses

Are you responding as (tick one)

(Choose any 1 options)

- an individual
- **a representative of a business or group**
- an elected representative

Answer this question only if you have chosen a representative of a business or group for Are you responding as (tick one) Please provide details (We may publish the name of the group or business in our reporting.)

- **University of Cambridge**

Please tell us the first four or five digits of your postcode e.g. CB3 7 or CB21 6

- **CB3 0T**

Ambition

A key principle of a new road classification is that private cars, vans and lorries would be required to use routes which maximise the use of main roads and minimise the use of local roads and streets. This would mean that many local streets which are currently used as 'rat-runs' to avoid delays and congestion on major roads or to shorten journeys would no longer be open to through traffic not requiring access to the immediate area. Through trips would be prevented by installing road closures known as modal filters.

Access to these local roads and streets would be made from the closest main road junction to reach their destination. All roads will still be accessible but journeys by cars, vans and lorries may be less direct and more inconvenient.

Buses and cycles would be allowed through the closure points to make these trips as reliable and convenient as possible.

Some main roads could see an increase in the amount of traffic as local roads and streets are closed to through trips. We will use traffic modelling to assess changes in traffic to consider what could be done to address any increases.

Full details can be found on pages 6 and 7 of the brochure.

Q1 . To what extent do you agree or disagree with the idea of motor vehicles being required to use main roads as much as possible to reduce through trips on local roads and streets by the use of point closures (modal filters)?

- **Strongly agree**
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Level of access for pedestrians and different vehicles

Pedestrians, cyclists and individual classes of vehicle would have different levels of access in the proposed new road classification. Some initial ideas on the level of access for each type of road user and class of vehicle have been developed, as shown in Table 1 on page 8-9 of the brochure.

Q 2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the initial ideas for the level of access for each of the types of road user and class of vehicle?

- Walking - Access to whole network other than where road safety would be compromised. **Strongly agree**
- Cycling - Access to whole network other than where road safety or pedestrian comfort and convenience would be compromised **Strongly agree**
- Bus - (covering local bus services, school transport and community transport) Extensive access to network other than on network street categories where bus movements are not permitted. **Strongly agree**
- Cars & Motorcycles - (covering both private cars & taxis) Routing to maximise the use of distributor roads and minimise the use of other network street categories i.e. access and exit to/from city destinations should be made via the closest available distributor road junction(s) **Strongly agree**
- Commercial vehicles (covering light and heavy goods vehicles) and Coaches - Routing to maximise the use of distributor roads and minimise the use of other network street categories i.e. access and egress to/from city destinations should be made via the closest available distributor road junction **Strongly agree**
- Emergency service vehicles - Access to whole network **Strongly agree**

Please tell us your reasons for your answers to the question above

- Recognise that Cambridge generates significant movement of people and that this will continue to grow. Evidence shows that road building (even if Cambridge had the space) will only generate more traffic thereby reducing the amount of quality liveable space available for people to move and enjoy the Cambridge environment.
- Cambridge needs a different solution, one that focuses on people first, we see these proposals as the first step to reallocating space, where appropriate, for people and communities.
- Spaces across the city clearly have different needs based on the density and activity undertaken by people, and the road network should be reclassified to support this as well as the wider ambitions of all stakeholders across the city. Ambitions such as carbon reduction, quality of space, health and well-being, equality in living, working and education. A sustainable future!
- The majority of university staff travel to work by non-car modes and students predominantly, when at university, walk or cycle between sites. Therefore, improvements to the network for these movement will be highly beneficial, particular within key areas of the city where space is restricted due to the density of people movements, poor air quality and conflict between modes is significant.
- In addition, we recognise that for some, travelling by car is the only option (for a variety of personal and operational reasons) therefore access for those in need will require careful consideration as to how these trips can be accommodated as the proposals develop.

We acknowledge that the proposals set out in this consultation are conceptual and consideration of the proposals as they develop will require further discussion to assess the impact on our staff, student and operational travel needs and we welcomed continued engaged with officers as the proposals develop

We are however concerned about the lack of supporting evidence provided within this consultation to support the proposal and would welcome further information being provided.

Categories of road and street

Some early thoughts on how the road network could be broken down into various categories of road and street based on the level of access and movement they provide within the wider road network, are shown in Table 2 on pages 10-12 of the brochure.

For each category of street some key characteristics have been identified.

Plan 2 on page 13 of the brochure shows how the various categories of road and street could be applied to the road network in Cambridge.

Q 3. How far do you agree or disagree that these road categories are the right ones?

- Primary Distributor Roads - main roads that all traffic could use **Strongly agree**
- Secondary Distributor Roads - smaller roads that all traffic could use to get to the city **Strongly agree**

- Area Access Streets - roads that would link the main roads to C roads in the city **Strongly agree**
- Local Access Streets - roads that would link the main roads to smaller roads in the city **Strongly agree**
- Civic Streets - mainly small streets in the city centre. Access for vehicles would be restricted **Strongly agree**
- Neighbourhood Streets - access for vehicles would be allowed but through movements would be restricted **Strongly agree**

Please tell us your reasons for your answers to the question above:

Given that the proposals set out in this consultation are conceptual the University does strongly agree with the general approach, but it is imperative that we are able to see an evidence-based set of options that couples road classification with specific measures.

As proposals come forward for other schemes such as City Access, demand management measures and possible 'charging' proposals as well as the interaction between schemes such as C2C, the Greenways and parking controls, the accumulative effect of all these schemes will impact considerably.

Without the evidence to support the proposals with the layering of the different schemes being proposed it has not been possible to understand whether these proposals are optimal for the wider sustainable growth delivery and how this may impact on university operations and specifically for sites within the city centre as well as our activities around Grange Road.

We expect that there will be further consultation and collaboration to ensure that key aspects of the University estate and operations can continue to function.

Q 4. Looking at Plan 2 on page 13, are there any changes or additions you would suggest to the way the categories are applied to the roads on the map?

Without the evidence to support the proposed road classification and the layering of the different schemes being developed, it is difficult to understand and therefore comment on whether there should be additions or changes to those proposed in Plan 2.

Please see below some general comments regarding specific areas of the network.

- **Eddington** - It is noted that Turning Way has been identified as an Area Access Street within the document. However, it should be noted that only Phase 1 of Eddington has currently been built out and that the further delivery of Eddington and associated infrastructure will be coming forward. Whilst Eddington Avenue and Turing Way has been designed as a slow speed (20mph) route to deter rat running it currently performs an important function for linking Huntingdon Road with Madingley Road (especially now that Storey's Way has been closed to through traffic). Therefore, we feel that further traffic modelling justification needs to be provided to assess the impacts of traffic on the main

strategic roads. We would therefore welcome the opportunity to discuss the road classifications within the West Cambridge area.’

- **Grange Road/Queen Road, West Road and Sidgwick Avenue area** - In this area of the city considerable increases are anticipated in public transport services and cyclists as a result of schemes such as C2C, Comberton Greenway and Madingely Road Walking and Cycling proposals to accommodate the continued growth within the City.
- We are also aware that there is a need to reduce traffic levels by approximately 25% across the whole network and significantly more within central Cambridge, in addition the University has a significant number of sites in this area requiring a range of access needs.
- Therefore we feel that further evidence and assessment needs to be provided to understand whether the proposals suggested are appropriate and would request further discussions regarding the road classifications in this area and how they will support the proposal for C2C, Comberton Greenway and other schemes coming forward through city access.
- **Pembroke Street/Downing Street/Trumpington Street area** - We are, concerned about the impact that current and future traffic control points and the proposed street classification have, in funnelling traffic from the west and the south into central Cambridge. This has resulted in significant impacts along Silver Street, Trumpington Street, Pembroke Street, Downing Street and Tennis Court Road, which has a harmful effect on a number of University and College sites in central Cambridge relative to severance, air pollution and conflict between people and vehicles.

Key issues for consideration

Traffic Displacement

The GCP Executive Board is due to consider the feedback from the Making Connections consultation later this year. Implementing the road classification changes at the same time (as far as possible) as the Making Connections proposals, if approved by the Executive Board, for some form of road user or parking charging combined with investment in enhanced bus services would reduce overall traffic levels in the city thereby reducing the risk of traffic displacement and creating more opportunity to give more road-space to walking, cycling and buses.

Please see Background and Context on page 4 of the brochure and Traffic Displacement on page 14 of the brochure for further details.

Please note that a new road classification for Cambridge would take several years to put in place and it would need to be brought in through a number of stages

Q 5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with implementing the road classification changes at the same time as the Making Connections proposals, which are subject to GCP Executive Board decision? **Strongly agree**

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with implementing the road classification changes at the same time as the Making Connections proposals, which are subject to GCP Executive Board decision? **Strongly agree**

Bus Routes serving the city

The **Making Connections** proposals, if approved by the Executive Board later this year, would see a significant increase in the number of buses operating in the city, and it might not be appropriate for buses to use some of the roads in the city centre they run on at present. The St Andrew's Street, Drummer Street and Emmanuel Street area, which is where many of the existing bus services begin or end their routes, is already at capacity. Therefore, if buses are routed further out from this area, we would need to look at the options available for alternative bus interchanges as well as some form of zero-emission shuttle bus service that links up with places people want to access in the city centre.

Please see **Background and Context on page 4** of the brochure (Making Connections), **City Centre Bus routes on page 14** of the brochure and **Plan 3: Bus routes and Pedestrian / Cycling Priority on page 15** of the brochure.

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach? **Strongly agree**

Pedestrian and Cycling Priority

The initial ideas for a new road classification suggest giving priority to walking and cycling in more streets in the city centre. Moving bus and taxi routes further out would provide an opportunity to increase the area where access could be limited to pedestrians and cyclists only. Motor vehicle access would be restricted by time of day and limited to essential needs.

Please see **Pedestrian and Cycling Priority on page 14** of the brochure and **Plan 3: Bus routes and Pedestrian / Cycling Priority on page 15** of the brochure.

Please also see the Cambridge City Council's **Making Space for People vision** document in the Documents section of the consultation website.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach? **Strongly agree**

Through-cycle movements

Removing more traffic from central area streets will benefit both pedestrians and cyclists. There would also be an opportunity to create alternative routes for cyclists to avoid the busiest pedestrian areas where contact between both groups can sometimes cause delay and friction.

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach? **Strongly agree**

Alternative ways around for people with disabilities

If the area of pedestrian priority is extended, we will need to make sure that the longer walking distances are not a barrier for people with disabilities and/or mobility needs. This would be done by providing alternative ways to get around the city centre, such as enhanced shop mobility or exploring a form of zero emission shuttle bus service to link up the whole area. Restricting access to some streets to pedestrians, cyclists and other active travel modes could help to improve safety for everyone.

Q10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach? **Strongly agree**

Taxis

Taxis contribute to congestion and have an impact on air quality in the same way as other motor vehicles do. However, they are the only viable transport option for some people.

Since the 1990s, taxis (hackney carriages and private hire cars) have been permitted to use all bus lanes and bus gates in the city, and they are exempt from some access restrictions in the city centre. Since that time the number of taxis has increased significantly, and this approach may not be appropriate in future.

Under a new road classification, taxi journeys could be treated in the same way as other car journeys. We also need to consider whether hackney carriages and private hire cars should be treated in the same way. Please see **Taxis on page 16** of the brochure.

Q11. To what extent do you agree with this approach both for hackney carriages and for private hire cars? **Neither agree nor disagree**

City Centre Deliveries

Combining deliveries where possible for the final part of the trip and using low-emission vehicles or e-cargo bikes would help to reduce congestion and improve air quality in the city. Allowing easier and more frequent access for these vehicles would encourage businesses to combine their deliveries. Other delivery vehicles would still have access during permitted periods.

Q12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach? **Agree,**

Please tell us your reasons for your answers above in Key Considerations (Questions 9-15)

- **Changes to the road network are welcomed to support free flowing public transport and active travel modes as well as improvements in air quality and our city environment. We are, however, concerned about the impact that current traffic control points have in funnelling traffic from the west and the south into central Cambridge. This has resulted in significant impacts along Silver Street, Trumpington Street, Pembroke Street, Downing Street and Tennis Court Road, which has a harmful effect on a number of University and College sites in central Cambridge relative to severance, air pollution and conflict between people and vehicles.**
- **This area has the potential to create a quality urban realm to support the promotion of cultural facilities including a number of university museums. We would, therefore,**

welcome a review of the current arrangements and identify how traffic levels in these locations can be reduced substantially.

- Whilst on-street parking has a role within the City, we support the removal of spaces in areas where other transport opportunities exist and where there is greatest risk to pedestrians, air quality and the city's heritage. However, any measures that restrict the use of private vehicles must be commensurately mitigated by improvements to public services and sustainable means of travel. This is essential for university students and staff as well as the wider University community.
- Taxis for many offer a lifeline providing access to education and employment as well as many other needs. Therefore careful consideration needs to be given on how restricting access for taxis to some areas of the city may in fact result in exacerbating inequality for particular groups.
- Offering greater access to taxis than the private car in some areas of the city to support an integrated and accessible transport network that connects people with place may be appropriate.
- Deliveries will require considerable additional support to include consolidation centres, collection hubs and the transition to new vehicles and ways of working. This will take time and the approach to supporting this need to be reflected in the transition to restrictions on the network.
- Some University deliveries are unable to be consolidated due to the sensitivities or size of the delivery, therefore consideration as to how these type of deliveries can be accommodated will be required.

Vehicle and user exemptions

For a new road classification some level of flexibility would be necessary to address disproportionate impacts on vehicular access if through traffic is prevented from using some routes and further restrictions on access are considered in the city centre. Please read **Vehicle and user exemptions on page 17** in the brochure.

Note on blue badge holders

Journeys by car undertaken by blue badge holders also contribute towards congestion and have an impact on the environment. With an ageing population the number of blue badges can be expected to increase in future years.

Access exemptions are usually issued to specific vehicles but a blue badge is issued to an individual rather than to a specific vehicle which can make enforcement difficult as blue badge holders may use multiple vehicles.

For some blue badge holders with more severe disabilities, the inconvenience of making longer trips could cause increased distress and discomfort. Therefore, any exemption for blue badge holders could be selective, based on the level of disability.

Q13. How important or unimportant do you consider exemptions for the following categories?

(Very important, Important , Neither important nor unimportant, Unimportant, Very unimportant)

- Blue badge holders, based on the level of disability **Very important**
- Public service vehicles, such as refuse collection vehicles **Very important**
- Delivery vehicles making multiple drops **Very important**

Please tell us your reasons for your answers above

Q14. Are there other users who should be considered for exemption? (Please specify)

The University being embedded across the city naturally requires a number of journeys between sites. We are working hard to reduce these as well as when they do occur reduce the impact. The majority of our journeys for work purposes are by active travel and public transport modes and our operational journeys are managed to reduce their impact, wherever possible.

However, there are a number of journeys that require access 24/7 to attend to safety and security issues, including emergency vehicles as well as to ensure safe transportation of sensitive goods, and delivery of specialist equipment into the proposed restricted areas at key times during the day. Often this requires a particular entry point to a site because of width restriction, this will require further consultation as details of specific restriction on the network are known.

Road Safety

Road safety is a key consideration for a new road classification. As part of the wider City Access project, a new classification could encourage a shift towards greater use of public transport and encourage active travel which would reduce overall traffic levels in the city.

Q15. To what extent do you think a new classification would improve or worsen safety, and help reduce road casualties? (Greatly improve, Improve, Neither improve or worsen, Worsen or Greatly worsen).

Greatly improve

Please tell us your reasons for the above answer

A majority of incidents on the network are as a result of conflict between different modes of transport and those most serious are between motorised traffic and active modes of travel. Therefore proposals which reduce the interaction between these modes should improve safety.

There will however be further consideration to the streetscape design particularly where different modes/road classifications intersect to ensure the network doesn't become a series of incident hot spots at these intersections.

Equalities

We have a duty to ensure that our work promotes equality and does not discriminate or disproportionately affect or impact people or groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, such as younger or older people, or those with disabilities.

Please comment if you feel any of the proposals would either positively or negatively affect or impact on any such person/s or group/s.