

Cambridge drops peak time access control plan for roads

DEMAND MANAGEMENT

by Andrew Forster

PLANS FOR peak hour road closures in Cambridge have been abandoned after the idea received the thumbs-down from the public. But preparation of a workplace parking levy scheme will continue and investigations are to commence into a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ).

Local authorities in the Greater Cambridge City Deal (Cambridgeshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire) consulted last summer on a package of measures to manage travel in the city. The most eye-catching was a plan for peak time congestion control points at six locations in the city (*LTT* 22 Jul 16).

Access through the points would be restricted to buses, taxis, cyclists and emergency vehicles at peak times on Mondays to Fridays, with a suggested operating period of 07.00-10.00 and 16.00 to 18.30. All other general traffic would have to find an alternative route or be subject to a fine. The points would be monitored by ANPR cameras.

The proposal was to introduce the controls this autumn, via an



Holden: parking levy should resemble Nottingham's

18-month experimental traffic order. The plans have now dropped after they were opposed by almost two-thirds (64.5%) of the nearly 10,000 respondents to the consultation.

Hilary Holden, Cambridgeshire's lead officer, city access, for the City Deal, told councillors: "It is clear that there are some valid concerns relating to air pollution on busier streets, worries that people would be prevented from accessing/leaving their homes and businesses during peak times, and concern that the needs of disabled citizens have not been taken into account."

The councils will take forward work on a workplace parking levy, as well as plans for better public transport, better walking and cycling facilities, on-street parking controls in residential areas, smart technologies to help travel choices, travel planning, and public space improvements.

They plan to work with employers to co-design a parking levy scheme. It too is unpopular with many people – 40.6% of respondents to the consultation expressed their opposition.

Said Holden: "It is recommended that as far as possible the Cambridge workplace parking levy should resemble the Nottingham template." Nottingham City Council is the only authority in the country to have implemented a workplace parking levy.

Holden said the levy income stream could fund measures such as "more frequent bus services and/or removing the charge for parking at park-and-ride sites".

Cambridgeshire County Council introduced charges at park-and-ride sites in 2014. Last summer it was reported that adult ridership on park-and-ride buses is 14% below pre-charge levels (*LTT* 10 Jun 16).

Implementation of a levy in

Cambridge is judged to be at least three years away.

Consultant Mott MacDonald estimates that Cambridge has 41,962 off-street private non-residential (PNR) parking spaces, 3.8% more than the 40,423 recorded in a 1989/90 study by consultant Colin Buchanan. The figures exclude public general use car parks and private residential parking.

The number of PNR spaces in the city centre core has more than halved since the 1989/90 study – down from 4,001 to 1,546. PNR spaces in the Science Park/Northern Fringe area have almost tripled to 9,581.

Mott MacDonald also reports that the utilisation rate of PNR spaces in the city has fallen, from 27,647 (68.4%) in 1989/90 to 23,989 (57.2%) in 2016.

"This reflects the falling average car mode share in the city across the same period," it says. In the Science Park/Northern Fringe the utilisation rate is just 52% (4,975 spaces occupied).

The councils are to start preparing plans for a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in central Cambridge, within the city's existing Air Quality Management Area.