



Norwich Highways Agency committee

19 March 2020

Public questions/petitions

The following questions were submitted to be considered at the above meeting. The meeting was cancelled due to the current pandemic and therefore written responses have been provided by the chair, in consultation with the voting members, on behalf of the committee.

Q1 Electric buses

Les Rowlands, Ipswich Road, asked the following questions:

“The Department for Transport is launching a scheme for a winning area to be given £50,000,000 to help pay for a new fleet of electric buses. The chosen city or town will be used as a model by the government to ensure all buses are fully electric by 2025. What plans has Norwich City and Norwich County Council to apply?”

Can someone explain why First Bus in 2020 is still using 18 year old diesel buses in the city that give off excessive smoke and fumes which are being inhaled by pedestrians and cyclists alike?”

Response on behalf of the committee from Councillor Adams (chair):

“The city and county councils are fully aware of the recent funding announcement from the Department for Transport relating to the establishment of an all-electric bus town/city and are in discussions with bus operators regarding this opportunity.

First Bus provide bus services in Norwich on a commercial basis and are responsible for the vehicles it operates. The Transforming Cities Fund application made to government outlined a considerable investment in new and cleaner buses by First Bus and we are discussing with First Bus what the next steps are given the recent budget announcement that the Norwich application is subject to further business case approval.”

Q2 : City Road 20mph speed enforcement

Madeline Weston, City Road, asked the following question:

“How does the county council intend to intervene in new and other 20mph areas where it is clear that motorists are paying no regard to the limit.

I was concerned about traffic not observing the 20mph limit on City Road shortly after it was changed from 30mph. I contacted the Police (Norwich South) by email on

19 October 2019 and on Friday 15 November, the site was attended by a local police constable with a radar device; the time was 4pm. I met him on site and watched him stop numerous vehicles who were speeding. He emailed afterwards to say "In the hour I was monitoring the traffic in City Road I stopped fourteen vehicles which were travelling between 25-30mph. Due to the recent change of the mandatory limit I felt on that occasion that words of advice were proportionate". (He even monitored a bicycle exceeding the 20mph.) This implies that people were speeding because the change in the limit was comparatively recent. I would now dispute this as there has been no improvement and I believe that some drivers are going faster than 30mph a lot of the time. The worst stretch is from Hospital Lane to the junction of Queens Road as this is straight and affords a good sight line. He attended on a second time with similar results.

There is a real conflict between residents and motorists in this area of City Road, which has two zebra crossings, two schools, and an old people's home as well as being a residential street. I have had a car overtake me when I was driving at 20mph; and a car drive over the zebra crossing while I was in the middle of it, holding a dog on a lead.

It can also be dangerous to leave a parking place as residents park facing either way; I have had three hip replacement operation meaning I try and park outside my house on City Road and need to open the car door fully. If I am parked with the driver's side against the pavement it is easy to get in the car, but very difficult to pull out against fast oncoming traffic. I indicate and put my full beams on temporarily but behind a van the driver's sight line is severely restricted. Even putting out slowly and carefully I have had near misses from speeding traffic approaching. If parked with the driver's door next to the traffic, I find it dangerous to get in with my door fully open (I have to lift my leg in). Similarly when entering City Road from Cricket Ground Road, if a van is parked to the right, you have to pull forward carefully and speeding traffic barely has time to avoid you.

Two houses in St Marks Terrace in City Road have driveways in front of their houses, and each has two cars. They have to back in in order to leave safely and this manoeuvre is risky.

The signs to advise of the 20mph are minimal. The sign at the top of City Road on the ring road is above a bus stop - already quite high up - and above that is the information sign about the parking zone and times, and that is large. So the 20mph sign above those two is virtually above the sign light of an approaching motorist. The road surface roundels are not proving effective.

I suggest that the only solution to this constant and dangerous disregard for the statutory limit is an electronic sign that flashes 20 when motorists are going too quickly. Sited on a lamp post this can, I am told, take advantage of the supply and is not unduly costly.

I hope the council can consider this seriously before there is an accident."

Response on behalf of the committee from Councillor Adams (chair):

“I am sorry to hear of the problems Ms Weston has experienced in City Road, particularly around her difficulties in getting in and out of her vehicle. I am saddened to hear that she had a driver ignore her on the zebra crossing; such behaviour is inexcusable and solely the responsibility of the driver in question.

Experience has shown that the 20mph flashing signs work best when they are moved from site to site. Permanent ones soon become ineffective as drivers become blind to them.

The signing of the 20mph limit is in line with the Department for Transport requirements, and 20mph is considered to be the appropriate speed for the road, given there is a school fronting it, a number of pedestrian crossing points and on street parking. While I appreciate that Ms Weston has experienced problems these have not translated into accidents, and the accident record for city hall is well within the nationally accepted rate. That being the case I'm afraid that we cannot justify further funding in the area for additional measures.”

Q3 : Mansfield Road

Tom Rushworth, Mansfield Road, asked the following question:

“The short section of Mansfield Lane in Old Lakenham that runs between its junction with Sandy Lane and the mini roundabout where it meets Long John Hill and Stoke Road, is frequently and increasingly, been used by HGV's and buses that are totally unsuitable for such a narrow and busy road. This has resulted now in four separate incidents within 18 months, when vehicles of this type have hit the boundary walls to our house, 161 Mansfield Lane on three occasions, and once when the boundary wall to Lakenham Mill on the other side of the lane was hit by a bus, all causing significant damage. Full details with, maps and photos have been provided to the city council (Kieran Yates) and via Cllr Patrick Manning, in numerous correspondence, following the first incident in October 2018. This has now become a major cause for concern which I know is shared by our neighbours who live along Mansfield Lane.

Can the city council please confirm what action they propose to take and who is responsible for such action, particularly as I understand that it will be passing to the county council?”

Response on behalf of the committee from Councillor Adams (chair):

“As Mr Rushworth is aware the responsibility for highways is to pass from the city council to the county council at the end of the month. That being the case, the reality is that the city council can do nothing to assist in the matter, other than to make sure that the county council is aware of the issue, which it has already done.

While the problems are manifesting themselves in the city council area, the problems actually stem from the beyond the city boundary. It is large vehicles approaching the city from the south that are the issue. To solve the problems in Mansfield Lane

measures are needed in south Norfolk. Possible solutions previously considered by the city highways team include:

- Lowering the road under the railway bridge on Long John Hill – very expensive and would need Network Rail consent;
- Allowing HGV's to go along White Horse Lane into Trowse – hugely unpopular with Trowse residents;
- Acquiring land from adjacent properties to widen the road – Expensive and very controversial;
- Introducing weight limit and signing an alternative route for large vehicles. – Cannot guarantee compliance and currently there is no means of enforcing weight limits by camera so could easily be ignored.

However it is clear that none of the solutions are without their own problems. I am sure that when the city team move to the county council, they will be able to work with the south area team to further investigate the problems and potential solutions.

At this point, and especially in light of the recent events that caused the committee not to be held, I'm unable to give an indication of timescales for this."

Q4, 5 and 6 CPZ "WELSH STREETS"

Alison Bateman/Julia Moss asked the following question:

"Since the extension in early January 2020 of controlled parking to neighbouring roads in Nelson Ward, the number of cars parking on the section of Christchurch Road between The Avenues and Earlham Road has increased dramatically, especially close to the junction with Earlham Road. Often, a line of densely-parked vehicles reduces the road to a single lane, causing multiple safety issues including the following:

1. **Dangerous congestion** at the Earlham Road junction where vehicles turning into Christchurch Road suddenly have to stop because of tailed-back oncoming vehicles on the wrong side of the road.
2. **Danger to pedestrians** as cars are now mounting and driving along the pavement to pass oncoming vehicles.
3. **Danger to all road users** as drivers are exceeding the speed limit in order to get to a passing place before meeting traffic coming in the opposite direction.
4. **Danger to all road users** as residents exiting drives have reduced sightlines as cars are often parked tightly to drives.

The double yellow lines at the Christchurch Road/Earlham Road junction need to be extended as a matter of urgency before a serious accident occurs. At 12 metres they are much too short, considerably shorter than those at other nearby less busy junctions with minor roads.

The length of other double yellow lines at junctions along Christchurch Road should also be reviewed especially at the Le Strange Close/Christchurch Road junction where there are currently none at all.

The committee will have seen the serious safety concerns expressed by the residents of Christchurch Road and Le Strange Close in the supporting documents. The committee should also be aware of numerous emails to councillors and Bruce Bentley.

In view of the safety issues detailed above, we urge whoever is or will be responsible, whether it is the City or County, to take urgent action. Changing responsibility is not good reason for inaction.

Whoever is responsible needs to urgently address the traffic congestion, dangerous driving and inconsiderate parking along this section of Christchurch Road. This may require the introduction of a range of parking and speed control measures.

Will the committee please respond to and take action on these serious safety concerns?"

Response on behalf of the committee from Councillor Adams (chair):

"I really cannot currently add to the advice that residents have already received from Mr Bentley

There are a significant number of roadworks to the west of the City at the current time, particularly on orbital routes, and it is likely that this will be impacting on the level of traffic on Christchurch Road. These works will be drawing to a close over the next 4-5 weeks and I would expect traffic to return to previous routes. It seems unlikely that changes to parking restriction in nearby streets would have had a significant impact on traffic levels on Christchurch Road, but I am aware that some car parking has been moved from adjacent streets and on to Christchurch Road.

It is not be appropriate to review the current situation until the revised parking arrangements have been in place for some months and the roadworks have been completed as experience has proven that you do need to give any transport or parking scheme some time to settle in to assess the real impacts. Norwich City Council will no longer be responsible for transport works after 1 April, however, as these will be transferring to Norfolk County Council and whilst the city council is retaining some parking functions, we do not yet know who will be dealing with reviewing issues such as the ones you have raised. I am sorry, but I cannot advise you as to what might happen in the future at the current time."

Q5 Paul Errington, Caernarvon Road to ask the following question

"As a resident of the street, I sometimes find that I am unable to find a space on Caernarvon Road in the evening. When this happened before permitting was extended in January, I was always able to park on one of the neighbouring streets. Now when this happens I have had to park further away, on Edinburgh

Road, it's surrounding streets, or on Christchurch Road, which can then require a fifteen minute walk to my house. I can park on one of the permitted welsh streets where there are normally numerous spaces, if I need to use my car before 8am the following morning, but often I don't need my car the next day as I can walk to my base office. Finding a space outside the permit zone involves driving around the area unnecessarily and producing more pollution than was previously the case. This is also adding to parking problems of people who live outside the permit zone.

Parking in the day time is also much less reliable than it was before the scheme was introduced. Along with other people on the street, I have witnessed people parking on the street in the morning then walking towards the city, presumably for work and returning in the evening. In the past, spaces were always numerous during the daytime as most people with cars are out at work, which made it easy to arrange deliveries and visits from tradespeople. When our boiler leaked this year, the gas engineer had to park on Wellington Street and carry his tools from there because he was unable to park on Caernarvon Road.

In the beginning, I did not want permit parking and signed the petition against it. However, I accept that since the other streets voted for it, I believe it is practical and necessary for Caernarvon Road to join the permit zone."

Councillor Adams, chair, response on behalf of the committee:

"Thank-you for taking the time to outline the situation as you see it in Caernarvon Road and for explaining your experience of the street now that the rest of the area has been provided with a permit parking scheme. I note from the report that a significant number of residents of Caernarvon Road share your views."

Q6 Sandi George, Caernarvon Road to ask the following question:

"We appreciated the opportunity to have been left out of the parking permit area that you recently dealt with, a 'the wheel was not broken'. However, here are some questions I would appreciate your replies to:-

Would someone please join me in actually walking around the roads within this vicinity to see just how the excessive use of some double yellow lines are?

I am sure that you would have a better understanding of what I mean and how useless some of the yellow lines are if you could only do this. Some are placed where they are simply laughable because you could park there anyway. You are expecting vehicles to squeeze into less space; and accommodate Earlham Road vehicles as well as Avenue Junior School staff and Peabody Nursery. Why do you feel it necessary to have parking permits 8 - 6.30 pm & include Saturdays too?

How about 10 am to noon instead? This works in London where my son lives and was implemented for similar reasons that you maintain you are doing it; and residents want and that is to deter non-residents from parking on our roads?

How do you arrive at the figure of £5,000 to implement such a scheme? An informed breakdown of costs would be most useful.

If it is the £5,000 you state wouldn't resurfacing Caernarvon Road be a better idea as it needs to be done?

Speaking for myself, I feel that the residents who responded, responded directly other roads where permitted so their response was naturally a 'gut one'.

Now things have calmed down dramatically and parking spaces are available during the day except for the time when parents are collecting their children from school/nursery.

No-one is saying that car clubs are a poor idea but the positioning of them is on many occasions, questionable such as the ones you place outside, or very close to schools. This maybe should be looked into. The one on Caernarvon could have been placed next to the one on the Avenues for example.

Many residents on the road do not believe that the implementation of parking permits on the road will make a difference. A Cardiff Road resident said initially they did make a difference but not now.

Again, let's please consider a 10 am to noon parking permit. A compromise..... but one that works for us all. Or are the signs already to go?"

Councillor Adams', chair, response on behalf of the committee:

"The committee agreed last September to exclude Caernarvon Road from the permit parking scheme, on the condition that the residents there were given the opportunity to reconsider the position once the rest of the parking scheme went in. I think that it is clear from the responses that have been received from residents of Caernarvon Road that a significant number of them have changed their minds.

Whilst I appreciate that you personally do not want permit parking and believe that the current situation is acceptable, it is clear to me that this view is not held by very many of your neighbours. Indeed, this is clear from the responses contained in the committee report and from the earlier question.

Should the extension of permit parking be agreed, then Caernarvon Road would become part of Zone P. That zone operates between 8am and 6.30 pm Monday to Saturday because the parking issues the residents experienced are not just from all-day commuters. The operational hours were made clear in the consultation and were not a cause of concern expressed by residents. The position in London is very different and the short permit parking periods are used in locations where parking issues are caused primarily by commuters completing their journeys to work by public transport.

The double yellow lines have been installed as a result of the refuse vehicle being routinely prevented from making collections in the area. The extent of them was determined by checking the minimum amount of space required for a refuse vehicle

to turn at the junctions. Since the lines were installed, the refuse collection company have confirmed that access to the area has been significantly improved

The £5000 cost of the scheme was estimated knowing the length of the road and the typical installation costs of permit parking schemes. Since the report was published, the contractors have provided a quote for the work of £5,181.91.

The car club bay has been installed to provide for residents in the Caernarvon Road area and will shortly have a new car in it. The aim is to provide a range of locations close to people's homes to make the use of the car club as convenient as possible. The car club has been proven to substantially reduce the number of cars that residents choose to own, and consequently help to reduce parking pressures. The bays are introduced in response to local demand and that is why Caernarvon Road has been chosen as a location."