



NORWICH HIGHWAYS AGENCY COMMITTEE

10.00am to 11.35am

15 September 2011

Present: **County Councillors:** **City Councillors:**
 Adams (Chair) (V) Bremner (Vice-Chair) (V)
 Plant (V) Altman
 Bearman Carlo
 Scutter Sands (M) (V)

*(V) – Voting Member

Apologies: County Councillor Shaw
 City Councillor Gayton
 City Councilor Grenville

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

It was agreed that public questions would be taken at the beginning of item 3 (below) as the questions were all related to the consultation on the Dereham Road bus rapid transit.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2011.

3. NORWICH AREA TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - DEREHAM ROAD BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT) PHASE 1

Councillor Stephenson, Nelson ward councillor, asked the following question:

“Nelson, Mancroft and Wensum ward councillors have had several meetings with officers working on the Dereham Road BRT scheme in the last few months. During these meetings, we have asked for further consultation with local residents regarding the Heigham Road junction and any changes which maybe made to it. I've suggested that, at the very least, there should be a workshop at which any potential options can be discussed with residents and where residents' views and intimate knowledge of the area can be heard and taken into account.

Can you assure me that a workshop will take place and can you say when it will be? Failing that, could you explain how the councils will communicate with residents to let them know the time and location of the workshop?"

Mr Hewins then asked the following question:

"I wish to clarify the 'workshop' proposal: when will this take place, how will residents be informed of the time and place of the workshop, will all those who wish to attend be able to do so, what interval will there be between the workshop and a final decision, and must the final decision be taken at one of the regular NHAC Committee Meetings, open to the public, such as this one?"

A member of the public said she had previously spoken on behalf of residents at the March meeting of the Norwich Highways Agency committee and had been promised consultation but nothing had yet been arranged. She asked if the intention was to consult with a small group of residents or a wider audience and when it would take place.

The chair asked the officers to address the issues raised in the public questions in their presentation of the report.

Mark Kemp, project team manager (major projects), Norfolk County Council, presented the annexed report and outlined the following 4 options being considered for the Heigham Road/ Old Palace Road junction and explained that details were available on the council's website:

Option 1 was to leave the junction as it is at present but to upgrade the traffic signals which needed to be done as they have reached the end of their useful life. The cost is expected to be £150,000 to £200,000. The disadvantages of doing this would be that there would be no improvement to bus journey times and no advantage to cyclists or pedestrians.

Option 2 involved banning right turns from Dereham Road in each direction and providing new pedestrian crossing facilities. This option, which had previously been consulted on, would cost £300,000 and give the maximum benefit to bus journey times. However, it could result in some additional traffic using the side streets.

Option 3 had been developed as a result of the consultation and concerns about the removal of the right turn. It would cost £300,000 to £400,000 and would give improved bus journey times but as good as those in option 2. There would be an estimated 49 seconds delay in the morning peak as opposed to 35 seconds for option 2. Both option 2 and 3 provided significant benefits compared to the current average morning peak delay of 335 seconds. This option would provide pedestrian crossings on two of the four arms of the junction. The disadvantage of this scheme is that it would leave narrow but workable traffic lanes.

Option 4 considered a roundabout scheme. However, the cost would be £500,000 to £ 750,000 and give the worst bus journey times and it would not be a good solution for cyclists.

Members discussed the options for the Heigham Road/ Old Palace Road junction that should be taken forward for further consultation. It was suggested that option 1 represented a wasted opportunity and option 4 would be too expensive and have the worst journey times and that options 1 and 2 should be taken forward for further consideration.

Members recognised the level of interest and concern and as local people were best placed to identify possible effects of the proposals careful consideration needed to be given to further consultation. Any workshop style session would need to have limited numbers for it to be effective and it was suggested that this should be no more than twelve local ward councillors and twelve local people. To ensure that the maximum number of people had the opportunity to contribute a drop in session should also be arranged. A formal public consultation would follow and the results would be reported back to the committee.

The project team manager (major projects) referred to the proposals for the Barn Road section of bus lane and said that the review of the way that the junction with Grapes Hill worked had led to a proposal for a shortened bus lane which would need to be monitored in case it resulted in buses queuing beyond the start of the bus lane. The intention would be to introduce two lanes from Dereham Road to Grapes Hill and take out the pre-signal arrangement. Buses would no longer have to cross two lanes of traffic to turn into Grapes Hill and the extra land gained from the demolition of the public toilets would help to facilitate this improvement.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) confirm the decision on 24 March 2011 to introduce a 24-hour, 7 days a week eastbound bus lane with “no loading at any time” on the Dereham Road between Orchard Street and the junction with Grapes Hill/Barn Road and to:
 - (a) monitor the operation of the bus lane, to ascertain how effectively the scheme operates, and determine if the longer bus lane would be beneficial and report the findings back to the committee after a suitable period of monitoring;
 - (b) note the detailed design changes at the junction including providing two traffic lanes turning right into Grapes Hill, streetscape improvement works on the corner of St Benedict’s Street with Grapes Hill and the removal of the pre-signals as they are not required to improve bus movements through the junction;
- (2) undertake further consultation on options 2 and 3 for the Old Palace Road/Heigham Road junction, as minuted above, involving a four stage process as follows:
 - Phase 1 - drop in session for all interested residents;
 - Phase 2 - a workshop for twelve local ward councillors each accompanied by one local resident;
 - Phase 3 - public consultation;
 - Phase 4 - final decision by Norwich Highways Agency Committee.

4. NORWICH ROAD CASUALTY STATISTICS

The highways network analysis and safety officer, Norfolk County Council presented the latest data on Norwich road casualty statistics and explained that the information was based solely on incidents reported to the police and that other minor incidents were not reflected. One of the main ways forward to improve the statistics was through education as not all accidents would be prevented by using engineering solutions. There had been an increase of 10 accidents in the Norwich during the year although the overall trend was showing an improvement and the increase was in pedestrian casualties. There were no identifiable trends although there was a possible, but not robust link to alcohol consumption. There were cluster sites at Prince of Wales Road, Westlegate/Red Lion Street junction, Ipswich Road/Grove Road junction and Barrett Street/Long John Hill junction.

Members acknowledged that the cluster sites were already recognised as higher risk sites and action is already being taken to improve road safety in these areas.

RESOLVED to note the latest road casualty statistics.

5. GOVERNMENT ADVICE ON SPEED MANAGEMENT IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The head of city development services presented the annexed report on the proposed changes to the requirements for introducing 20 mph speed limits in residential streets. Members considered that it was of little value without police enforcement. The officer explained that speed limits needed to be either already close to 20mph or for the limits to be self enforcing, it was not enforcement by the police that made them effective.

RESOLVED to,

- (1) note the latest government advice on speed management in residential areas;
- (2) ask the head of city development services to present a report to a future meeting on a strategy for speed management in the city to take account of any Department for Transport's revised guidance on speed management in urban areas.

6. PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CAR PARK FEES AND CHARGES

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the head of development services, Norwich City Council, to support the proposed revisions to fees and charges at the city council's off-street car parks, to be considered by the city council's cabinet.

7. HIGHWAY PERFORMANCE MONITORING OF THE HIGHWAY AGENCY AGREEMENT

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the head of city development services, Norwich City Council, to note the performance of the highways agency agreement for the financial year 2011/12 to the end of August 2011.

8. MAJOR ROAD WORKS – REGULAR MONITORING

The head of city development services presented the annexed report. Councillor Bearman thanked officers for presenting the information in a very useful way for councillors.

In reply to questions, the head of city development services said that Finkelgate was still closed due to subsidence. The delay was due to the insurance company awaiting further information. The road closure had originally been funded by Norwich City Council but the council would be looking to the insurance company to take on future costs. Norwich city council officers were discussing how to open the road as soon as possible.

RESOLVED to note the current and planned roadworks in Norwich.

CHAIR