

## Use of Newmarket Road Bus Lanes by Freight Consolidation Centre Vehicles

Report by the Director of Planning and Transportation

### **Summary**

This report details the results of the preliminary consultations with key stakeholders regarding the experimental proposals to allow the use of the inbound bus lanes on Newmarket Road and the bus/loading only route through Castle Meadow/Red Lion Street by vehicles associated with the Norwich Freight Consolidation Centre.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 At its meeting of 10 January 2008 the Norwich Highways Agency Committee was presented with a report outlining proposals to allow vehicles operating from the Norwich Freight Consolidation Centre to use the inbound Newmarket Road bus lane and the bus/loading only route through Castle Meadow/Red Lion Street. Both this proposal and the implementation of the consolidation centre are part of the CIVITAS initiative, a series of projects in Norwich and across 36 other European cities focussed on cleaner and better cities.
- 1.2 At the meeting members resolved to support the proposals, but requested that they be informed of any significant objections that resulted from the preliminary consultations for the experimental TRO.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 13 March a petition objecting to the proposals was presented by City Councillor, Mrs Lubbock. It was reported that the petition would be included within the stakeholder consultation report due to be presented to NHAJC in May.

## **2. The Proposals**

- 2.1 The proposals are to implement a 12 month experimental TRO allowing vehicles operating from the Norwich Freight Consolidation Centre to use the inbound Newmarket Road bus lane and the bus/loading only route through Castle Meadow/Red Lion Street. The first 6 months of this period would be the opportunity for responses to the experiment, with the remaining period for assessment and reporting..
- 2.2 The proposals are shown on the plan in Appendix A of this report.

### 3. Responses to Proposals

3.1 As part of the process to implement an experimental TRO a consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders. Letters to the stakeholders were sent out in stages between 10 March 2008 and 18 March 2008, a summary of the responses received is contained in Appendix B of this report.

3.2 The main comments from the correspondence and are summarised below:

3.2.1 Concern about the danger of HGVs mixing with cyclists within the bus lanes, particularly with regard to the narrow width of the lane.

*Response: The latest Department For Transport consultation document 'Cycling Infrastructure Design' identifies 5.1m as the overall space required for an HGV to overtake a cyclist in a 30mph speed limit. This is the overall recommended space not the lane width. Earlier guidelines that refer to bus lane width, such as the Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/97, give 4.5m as the width required to allow an HGV to overtake a cyclist within the bus lane.*

*The bus lane widths along Newmarket road vary between 2.8m and 3.5m, with the average width being 3.1m. The proposed consolidation centre vehicles have similar dimensions as the existing buses using Newmarket Road although there may be times when different vehicles will have to be used. Observations on site show that the existing widths are not sufficient to allow the majority of buses to overtake cyclists whilst staying within the bus lane and they therefore do not attempt this manoeuvre. The situation would be the same for consolidation centre vehicles and the vehicles would not be looking to overtake cyclists whilst still remaining within the bus lane.*

*'On the job' training would be undertaken by all Consolidation Centre drivers so that they are made aware of specific situations that could arise as the result of use of the bus lane. In addition, a code of conduct has been developed to remind drivers of the training and how to behave when using the bus lane. The code of conduct has been revised since consultation and now includes a reminder that drivers should not attempt to overtake cyclists if they cannot move into the adjacent lane. The proposed code of conduct is shown in Appendix C.*

*The consolidation centre vehicles already have passenger side mirrors that provide a wider angle of view and 'close proximity' mirrors that enable drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists when they are to the side of a vehicle. However, with goods vehicles a blind spot can still occur in the area around the vehicle's passenger door. All consolidation centre vehicles will be fitted with lenses on the passenger side window so that this blind spot area is removed.*

3.2.2 Concern that the proposal may encourage other HGVs to use the bus lane and that there will not be adequate enforcement.

*Response: The consolidation centre vehicles will have side liveries to identify them. In addition when using the bus lanes the liveries shown in Appendix D will be placed*

*on the back of the vehicles. This will help identify those vehicles that can legitimately use the bus lane. The proposed temporary signs also shown in Appendix D of this report will be placed on lamp columns at suitable distances along Newmarket Road for the duration of the experiment. At the end of the experiment the need for permanent signing will be reviewed.*

- 3.2.3 Concern that if successful the proposals may be extended to other bus lanes or further HGVs would be allowed to use the bus lane.

*Response: With the consolidation centre located at Snetterton the main corridor for access into the city centre is via Newmarket Road. Should the experiment prove successful, the aim of this project is not to then permit additional HGVs to use either Newmarket Road or other bus lanes. The situation would remain as per the experiment with only the consolidation centre vehicles using the Newmarket Road lane. Allowing other HGVs into the bus lanes would be against the aims and objectives of the Consolidation Centre.*

*The consolidation centre is currently in operation and has 2-3 deliveries into Norwich per week. It is looking for further clients from retailers in the city centre. If the consolidation centre was a great success and developed a large customer base then it is unlikely that the number of deliveries into the city centre would be greater than 2-5 times per day. This is because the loads to the additional clients would still be consolidated together into the same vehicle trip. Some of the deliveries are likely to occur outside congested periods and therefore not involve HGVs using the bus lane.*

- 3.2.4 Comments that the proposals offer little benefit to consolidation centre vehicles and this benefit will be insufficient when compared to the deterrent effect on cyclists.

*Response: It is the purpose of the experimental scheme to determine its benefits to the consolidation centre vehicles. Evaluation of the experiment scheme would be based upon:*

- the potential to reduce emissions by consolidating loads, but also in terms of reduced journey times and less time spent in queued traffic*
- any new businesses that may be encouraged to use the consolidation centre due to the improved reliability*
- the benefits to the consolidation centre operation and the effects to other road users*
- enforcement of the proposals and assessment of any non-compliance*

- 3.2.5 Comments that a higher profile for the consolidation centre is not a justifiable reason for the proposals.

*Response: Whilst a benefit of the proposals would be a higher profile for the consolidation centre, other more significant benefits would be more reliable delivery times to retailers and reduced vehicle emissions. Lower vehicle emissions would be as a result of a reduced numbers of goods vehicles and less time for the consolidation centre vehicles idling or travelling in low gears in queued traffic.*

#### 4.0 Discussion

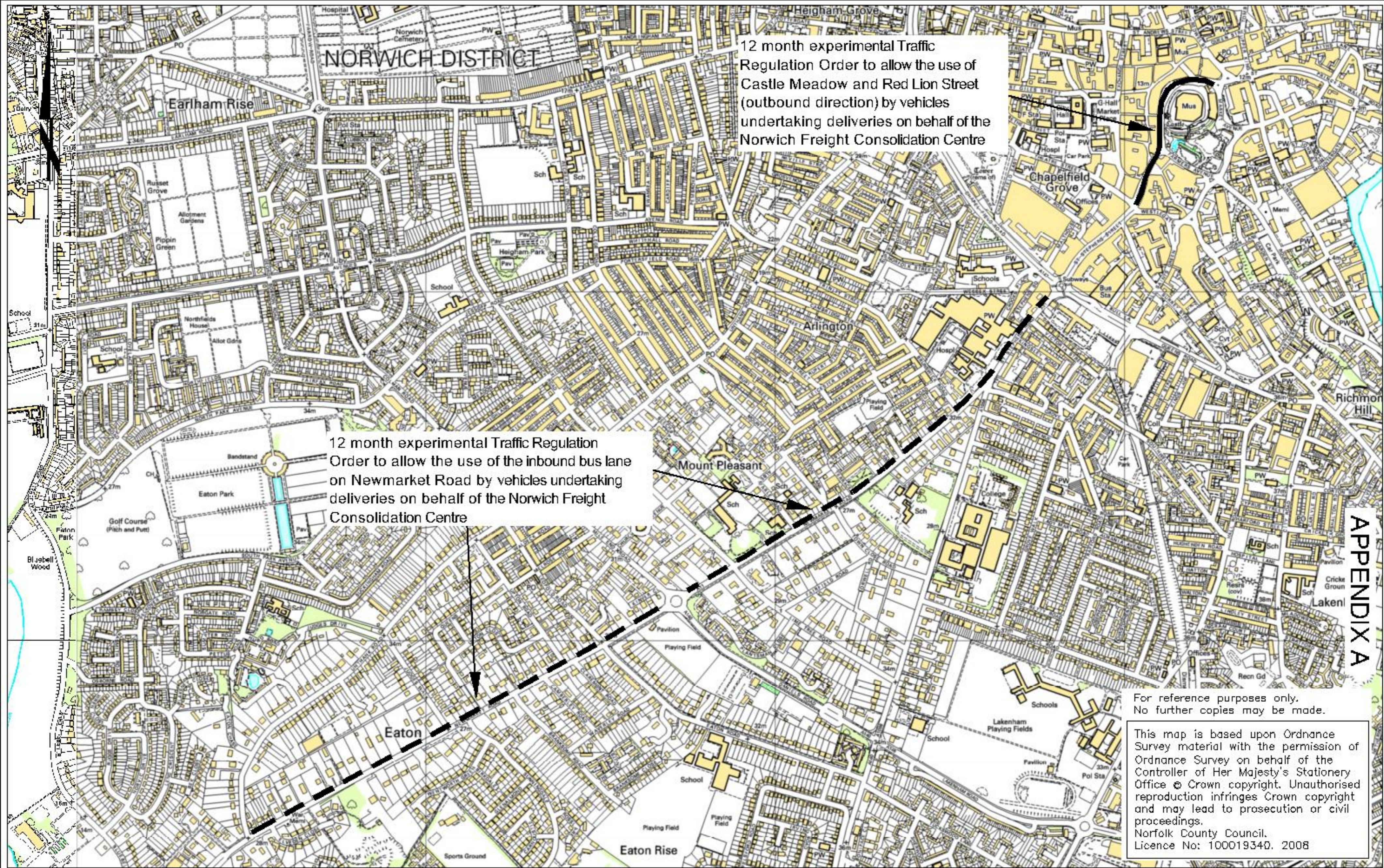
As is to be expected the main concerns regarding the proposal are in relation to the conflict with cyclists using the bus lane. In addition to the points made in section 3 it is important to remember the following factors:

- 1) that the bus lane is currently used by over 30 buses an hour during the day in addition to taxi use and that even if all the expected HGVs from the consolidation centre were to make use of it this would add the equivalent of one HGV every two hours (approximately 1% of the users)
- 2) that this measure is not intended as part of bigger proposal to allow either more HGVs into this bus lane or the wider bus lane network, particularly as this would be counterproductive to achieving the aim of reducing the impact of HGVs in the city centre
- 3) the overall impact on cyclists will be beneficial with less conflicts with HGVs within the city centre, often in more difficult locations where more cyclists are present
- 4) that the proposal is experimental and that it will only be taken forward to a permanent scheme if the experiment proves successful

#### 5.0 Action Required

It is recommended that the Committee:

- supports the introduction of a 12 month experimental Traffic Regulation Order allowing the use of the inbound Newmarket Road bus lanes and the bus/loading only route through Castle Meadow/Red Lion Street by the Norwich Freight Consolidation Centre vehicles.



12 month experimental Traffic Regulation Order to allow the use of Castle Meadow and Red Lion Street (outbound direction) by vehicles undertaking deliveries on behalf of the Norwich Freight Consolidation Centre

12 month experimental Traffic Regulation Order to allow the use of the inbound bus lane on Newmarket Road by vehicles undertaking deliveries on behalf of the Norwich Freight Consolidation Centre

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APPENDIX A

**Norfolk County Council**  
working with  
**McDonald's** **MAY GURNEY**

Mike Jackson  
Director of Planning and Transportation  
Norfolk County Council  
County Hall  
Martineau Lane  
Norwich NR1 2SG

DRAWING TITLE  
**Proposed Experimental Traffic Regulation Order**

REV.	DESCRIPTION	CHECKED	DATE

INIT.	DATE	DRAWING No.
SURVEYED BY	OS	TSB1398 (Meas 104YTD005)
DESIGNED BY	GB 3/08	PROJECT TITLE
DRAWN BY	GB 3/08	Castle Meadow 10.4: Priority road
CHECKED BY	PS 3/08	SCALE
		FILE No.
		TSB1398

Organisation	Comments	In favour/Object
Norfolk Constabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interested to see if other HGV drivers stay in the correct lane or follow the consolidation centre vehicles.</li> </ul>	Do not object
National Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suggests maximum speed limit when using the bus lane is never more than 30mph.</li> <li>suggests the word 'should' be replaced by 'must' in the code of conduct.</li> </ul>	No issues with proposal
Norwich Hackney Trade Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comments that the bus lane is currently being misused and there is a lack of enforcement. Believes that introducing more vehicles into the bus lane will make this situation worse.</li> <li>believes a bus lane is provided to move people in and out of the city most efficiently and allowing goods vehicles into a bus lane crosses the line of this principle.</li> </ul>	Objects
South Norfolk Cycling Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>believes the idea of consolidation is good in principle but the idea to use the bus lane is flawed.</li> <li>comments that the proposal will increase danger to cyclists as the lane appears to be of an inadequate width.</li> <li>despite the proposed vehicle liveries believes that other vehicles will be tempted to use the bus lane.</li> <li>believes raising the profile of the consolidation centre can be adequately carried out without the need to use bus lanes.</li> <li>comments that the use of Castle Meadow would be less dangerous to cyclists as there is more room to manoeuvre.</li> <li>concerned that the proposals would form a precedent that would discourage expansion in cycling to work trips.</li> </ul>	Objects
South Norfolk District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>welcomes the creation of the consolidation centre however there are concerns over the proposal to allow the bus lane use by its vehicles.</li> <li>comments that the bus lane is not of the recommended width to be used by HGVs and cyclists together.</li> <li>concerned that the code of conduct may not be adhered to.</li> <li>concerned that other HGVs may start to use the bus lane.</li> </ul>	Objects
East Anglian Cycling Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>believes that to allow any other form of motorised transport to use the bus lane, other than public transport buses, is dangerous.</li> <li>comments that the lane is only 3m wide, and this is not wide enough to allow the consolidation</li> </ul>	Objects

	<p>centre vehicles to over take cyclists without straying into the outside lane.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>believes that cyclists will not dare to use the bus lane, so defeating the object of encouraging their increasing use.</li> </ul>	
Norwich Cycling Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>considers that there is a demonstrable and significant physical hazard to cyclists by being made to share the very constrained road space with HGVs.</li> <li>believes that the proposals will have a deterrent effect on cycling on an important strategic route.</li> <li>comments that the advantages to consolidation centre vehicles will be insufficient to offset the hazard to cyclists.</li> <li>comments that the proposal would set a dangerous precedent for the use of bus lanes elsewhere.</li> <li>believes that the proposal will not be enforced effectively.</li> <li>believes it is unacceptable to seek to justify the proposals by providing a higher profile for consolidation centre vehicles.</li> <li>does not believe a proper audit of safety has been undertaken or there is any serious intent to monitor the experiment.</li> <li>believes advising cyclists against overtaking on the inside of passing vehicles is damaging to the amenity of cyclists, for whom the bus lane is currently the means of passing on the inside during queuing conditions.</li> <li>believes the code of conduct will not have a lasting affect on the drivers</li> <li>considers that it is an error to relate the small number of trips to negligible risk.</li> <li>does not believe there is any safety gain from training drivers of consolidation centre vehicles when they already come across cyclists and should be trained to deal with this.</li> <li>comments that the current bus lane widths on Newmarket Road do not meet the technical guidance recommendations for lanes where they are shared by cyclists and HGVs.</li> </ul> <p>Note: The Norwich Cycling Campaign produced a document ' Big Risk Little Gain: The case against allowing HGVs to use bus and cycle lanes in Newmarket Road, Norwich.</p>	Objects
Cyclists Touring Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>believes that although there only be 5 vehicles per day, this will be only be the beginning and soon all HGVs will be asking permission to use</li> </ul>	Objects

	<p>the lane.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• considers that large vehicles will be moving at speed creating the potential for accidents with the vulnerable users coming off worst.</li> <li>• considers that the proposal will deter cyclists from using the lane and preferring to use their cars instead.</li> </ul>	
Road Haulage Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• believes that the proposals are a welcome step forward and that allowing the use of bus lanes by consolidation centre vehicles will help reduce congestion on the road.</li> <li>• comments that because the vehicles will not be idling or using low gears then emissions will be reduced.</li> <li>• understands the concerns of cyclists but if vehicles are restricted to rigid 7.5t or 12t vehicles then this would be no difference to a bus travelling in the lane.</li> <li>• supports that the proposed advice given the consolidation centre drivers but suggests that similar advice should be given to cyclists – particularly advice about undertaking on the inside of large right turning vehicles.</li> </ul>	Supports
Norwich City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at its meeting on 18 March 2008 the council resolved to continue towards sustainable transport, encouraging more walking and cycling though a number of measures including asking the Norwich Highways Agency Committee to ensure that the bus lane on Newmarket Road be kept free of HGVs, including those from a freight Consolidation Centre.</li> <li>• at its meeting on 18 March 2008 the council also resolved to ask representatives on the Norwich Highways Agency Committee to vote against the proposals allowing HGVs to use the Newmarket Road bus lane.</li> </ul>	
Norfolk Fire Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Response</li> </ul>	No Response
Norfolk Ambulance Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Response</li> </ul>	No Response
Freight Transport Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Response</li> </ul>	No Response
Anglian Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Response</li> </ul>	No Response
Taxis Licensing Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Response</li> </ul>	No Response
First Eastern Counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Response</li> </ul>	No Response



Cycle Rights Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No Response</li></ul>	No Response
Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No Response</li></ul>	No Response
Sanders Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No Response</li></ul>	No Response
Konectbus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No Response</li></ul>	No Response
Semence Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No Response</li></ul>	No Response
Neave and Son	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No Response</li></ul>	No Response
Eastons Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No Response</li></ul>	No Response
Coach Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No Response</li></ul>	No Response

**Use of Newmarket Road Bus Lane by Norwich Consolidation Centre Vehicles**  
**Code of Conduct for Drivers**

**Before setting off:**

1. Ensure that your blind spot side mirrors are fitted to your vehicle and have been adjusted correctly to suite you.
2. Ensure that the relevant road safety message/bus lane use messages are fitted to the back of your vehicle.

**Who can use the bus lane?**

3. Only use the bus lane if your vehicle is making a delivery on behalf of the Freight Consolidation Centre.
4. Only use the bus lane if you have undertaken the associated training.
5. Only use the bus lane when there is significant congestion and you consider it to be of benefit to your journey.

**Whilst using Newmarket Road bus lane**

6. Currently 40mph and 30mph speed limits are in force on Newmarket Road. However, try to adhere to a maximum speed of 30mph whilst using the bus lane.
7. Your headlights should be on when using the bus lane irrespective of the time of day or lighting conditions.
8. A cyclist looking over their shoulder could mean they intend to change direction. However, be aware that they may suddenly need to change direction to avoid an uneven road surface, patches of ice/water or drain covers.
9. Only overtake a cyclist if you are able to move into the adjacent traffic lane. When overtaking a cyclist make full use of your blind spot side mirrors and at all times be aware of the position of the cyclist relative to the vehicle.

Note rule 163 of Highway Code which states *“Overtake only when it is safe and legal to do so. You should give motorcyclists, cyclists and horse riders at least as much room as you should when overtaking a car.”*

10. At junctions be aware of cyclists coming up from behind. Make full use of mirrors, including the blind spot side mirror, to locate any cyclists.

Proposed livery to be placed on back  
of Consolidation Centre Vehicles  
50mm x height variant would give  
sign 0.54m by 0.58m



Proposed livery to be placed on back  
of Consolidation Centre Vehicles  
62.5mm x height variant would give  
sign 1.03m by 0.91m



Proposed sign to be used on-street  
62.5mm x height variant would give  
sign 1.08m by 0.81m

