



**Committee Name: Cabinet**

**Committee Date: 08/09/2021**

**Report Title: Response to Transport for  
Norwich Strategy consultation**

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Inclusive and sustainable growth
<b>Report from:</b>	Executive director of development and city services
<b>Wards:</b>	All Wards
<b>OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	

### **Purpose**

Seek Cabinet support for the proposed response to Norfolk County Council's consultation on the draft Transport for Norwich Strategy.

### **Recommendation:**

That Cabinet approves the response to Norfolk County Council's consultation on the Transport for Norwich Strategy contained in appendix 1.

### **Policy Framework**

The Council has three corporate priorities, which are:

- People living well
- Great neighbourhoods, housing and environment
- Inclusive economy

This report meets all the corporate priorities.

This report addresses clean and sustainable city strategic action in the Corporate Plan

This report helps to meet the climate change and green economy objective of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan

## Report Details

1. Norfolk County Council has published the Transport for Norwich Strategy (the Strategy) in draft for consultation. The consultation commenced on 26<sup>th</sup> August and will end on 8<sup>th</sup> October. The document is available to inspect [here](#). The Strategy replaces the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy, which expires in 2021. Appendix 1 to this report contains the City Council's response to the consultation. The response is informed by the [City Council's response to the Local Transport Plan for Norfolk](#), which was agreed by Cabinet on 16 December 2020 and Cllr Stonard's response to public questions on the Norwich Western Link (NWL) at Cabinet on 20 January 2021, which is reproduced in appendix 2.
2. Whilst the production of the Strategy is not a statutory requirement it will be a significant document guiding operational decisions of the highways authority and infrastructure development proposals. The adopted strategy may be taken into account in making some decisions for which the City Council have responsibility. Its content may be considered material to planning decisions for instance.
3. The County intend to adopt the Strategy in December 2021 following the consideration of responses to the consultation and a discussion at the Transport for Norwich Joint Committee, on which the City Council has two political representatives. It is understood that the aim is to have an initial version of the action plan produced by the time the Strategy is adopted.
4. It will remain open to the City Council to consider whether or not to formally endorse or support the adopted strategy following its adoption by the County Council and depending on the extent to which the comments made in the consultation response are addressed.
5. The key points in the draft response are that the City Council:
  - Welcomes the production of the strategy and especially the recognition that reducing the climate impact of transport is the top priority, the commitment to set a carbon budget that must not be exceeded and to consider strong measures such as a workplace parking levy and congestion charging.
  - Looks forward to seeing more detail about how the policies will be implemented in the forthcoming action plan, which is urgently needed to provide detail on resources and timescales.
  - Calls for more information to be gathered and published about the performance of the transport system, such as the proportion of journeys made in different ways, so effective actions are selected and their effectiveness monitored.
  - Wants more radical and progressive policies:
    - promoting the affordability of transport;
    - spending more on supporting active travel and public transport relative to new road schemes;
    - recognising that building new roads fuels traffic growth;
    - spending more on helping people to get around Norwich relative to the money spend on getting people to and from Norwich;
    - making 20mph the default speed limit across Norwich;

- using new legal mechanisms to make buses more affordable, reliable and less polluting;
  - co-ordinating planning and transport policies more effectively, such as through a strong commitment to implementing a network of mobility hubs throughout the city and its growth areas that are a focus for new building;
  - accelerating the installation of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles;
  - recognising the need for transport schemes to protect and enhance biodiversity;
  - making new streets more beautiful and healthy by planting trees; and
  - maintaining existing streets better by looking after trees, paving and cycling infrastructure rather than building new roads that then need to be maintained.
- Is not currently able to support the NWL because the draft Strategy appears not to meet the tests explained in January 2021 (see appendix 2).
  - Should have a stronger voice in transport decisions.

## **Implications**

### **Financial and Resources**

5. There are no direct financial consequences of making the proposed response. However, there are potentially considerable financial consequences depending on the content of the final strategy and how it is implemented. In particular it should be noted that the proposed response to County accepts the need to review parking policy and charges in line with the commitment made in our response to the Local Transport Plan in December 2020.

### **Legal**

6. There are no legal implications for the City Council from agreeing this response to the County's transport consultation and the statutory responsibility lies with the County Council because it will be their transport strategy.

### **Statutory Considerations and Risk Management**

7. As the Strategy will be adopted by the County Council rather than the City the duty to ensure statutory considerations and management risks lies with them. It should be noted that the County Council have prepared a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Strategy and this should demonstrate how a number of statutory considerations have been taken in to account in the preparation of the document. This is available [here](#). The degree to which the Strategy has responded to statutory considerations is also addressed in the proposed consultation response.
8. Similarly the risks associated with production of the Strategy are matters for the County Council to consider rather than the City.

## **Other Options Considered**

9. There is no statutory requirement for the City Council to respond to the consultation so it would be possible for the City Council to issue no response or a different one to that contained in the appendix.

## **Reasons for the decision/recommendation**

10. Cabinet is being recommended to approve the response to the consultation on the Transport for Norwich Strategy so the City Council can influence the final version of the Strategy and through that the policy that is applied to transport in Norwich.

## **Background papers: None**

## **Appendices:**

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## Appendix 1

### Transport for Norwich Strategy consultation

#### Norwich City Council response

#### DRAFT

##### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Norfolk County Council has published a draft of the Transport for Norwich Strategy (the Strategy) for consultation. The consultation document can be found on the County's website [here](#). This document contains our response to the consultation and is structured to follow the order of the Strategy. Numbered references within the text of this response refer to paragraph numbers within the Strategy.
- 1.2 On 16 December 2020 the City Council's cabinet approved a [consultation response](#) to the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Norfolk. That response was produced to inform not only the LTP but other transport policy documents such as the Strategy. This response evaluates the degree to which the Strategy satisfies the principles and interventions that we advocated in our response to the LTP.

##### 2.0 General comments

- 2.1 Having a current transport strategy of a city of Norwich's importance is essential. The current Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) has almost expired and is rarely referred to. Although the work to produce a new strategy was overdue we are impressed by the energetic commitment of the County over the last few months to produce a strategy and to involve City Council officers in the process.
- 2.2 NATS contained a very large number of policies that meant the main messages and policy priorities were obscured. By contrast the brevity of the Strategy give the potential for it to have more clarity and impact.
- 2.3 The speed with which the draft Strategy has been produced and the lack of preparatory work before this year has meant that most of the detail around how the high-level policies will be implemented has been left to an action plan. The TfN Strategy contains lists of important "key actions" and "supporting actions". It would be helpful to understand the relationship between these and the action plan and whether "key actions" are deemed to be more important than "supporting actions".
- 2.4 In the light of the above it is considered important that the Strategy is amended to clearly set out information explaining when these actions will be done, by whom and with what resources is included as an appendix to the Strategy prior to its adoption. Some of this may not be known and the appendix can be updated to reflect the work that takes place following

the adoption of the Strategy. The Strategy should contain a commitment to regularly reviewing the action plan and Strategy itself.

- 2.5 Although most of the policies lack specific quantitative commitments and we need to wait for the action plan to see these, it would be helpful to see more data on the current performance of the transport networks that will form a baseline. If this is not possible to include within the Strategy prior to its adoption a clear commitment should be given to producing baseline information on performance of the transport network and updating this on a regular basis. An example of critical information that is not currently available is the split between different modes of transport in the Strategy area. Without this it will not be possible to know whether Norwich is meeting the government's expectation in "Gear Change" (2020) that half of all journeys are walked or cycled by 2030 or the degree to which measures to boost bus use are taking cars off the road.
- 2.6 The Strategy contains a strong policy commitment to walking, cycling and public transport. This is very welcome but it risks being rhetoric if it is not backed up with clear funding commitments.
- 2.7 The geography of where policies and scheme interventions will be applied is currently missing and the key diagram mentioned in 12.9 and 12.10, which will include network and schemes in the final version of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan that was recently consulted on, will be an important component of the Strategy.

### 3.0 Chapter 1 - Background

- 3.1 The section on current progress and achievements (1.19) lists an impressive range of activities that have improved the transport system over the last decade. The role of the City Council is acknowledged in relation to public realm improvements in Westlegate and Tombland. In fact, the City Council were instrumental in many of these achievements due to the highways agency agreement with the County that worked well until it was terminated in March 2020.
- 3.2 No comments are proposed on Chapter 2 – Policy Context.

### 4.0 Chapter 3 – Problems, issues and opportunities

- 4.1 No detailed comments are offered on this chapter. However, the recognition that climate change and the achievement of net zero carbon targets is our main challenge (3.2) in the transport sphere is very welcome.

### 5.0 Chapter 4 - Vision and themes

- 5.1 The vision statement is supported because it succinctly expresses the characteristics of an environmentally progressive transport system and their contribution to human thriving. It reflects the concept of the 15

minute city, pioneered in Paris, where the essential ingredients of a fulfilling life are available within a 15 minute walk of peoples' homes. The only deficiency is a lack of reference to the need for transport to be "affordable", which is important for fairness and equity. This change would be consistent with the content of the "overcoming barriers" section in chapter 10.

- 5.2 The themes are described in this section as future scenarios whereas in the executive summary they explain the scope of the relevant chapters. This is confusing. The future scenarios either need to be fuller and more clearly related to the policies or should replicate the content of the executive summary. Making explicitly clear in the text that what is described under these themes is not a description of current circumstances, but is a description of the future circumstances that are aimed for is necessary. It would help considerably if some time horizon could be given for the achievement of these.

## 6.0 Chapter 5 - Norwich and Norfolk

- 6.1 Strategic connections to other parts of the region and the country are important. However, the resources currently devoted to moving people between Norwich and other places more quickly and reliable is disproportionate to its importance and deprives the city of resources to help people move around the city and its strategic growth area.
- 6.2 The Strategy says that "Sustainable transport measures will be promoted to capture the benefits of these connections within the Norwich urban area" (5.9). The Strategy does not provide any evidence that demonstrates how the construction of these schemes will facilitate large scale sustainable transport improvement within Norwich, such as the ability to reallocate road space on radial routes or downgrade sections of ring road to reduce severance and assist regeneration. There is a supporting action that relates to this: "Carry out a strategic assessment to evidence the opportunities to deliver enhanced sustainable transport interventions as a consequence of completing the committed Transforming Cities interventions (a major package of improvements focused on public transport, walking and cycling) and the Norwich Western Link (NWL)." (5.11). It is not clear what this means or when it will happen in relation to the submission of the development consent order for the NWL and clarification is needed.
- 6.3 It would be helpful if the Strategy recognised that building and enlarging roads fuels the growth of motorised traffic and car-based patterns of development and that this leads to calls for more roads to be built to ease the pressure and congestion caused by the earlier road schemes, as seen in places such as Costessey and Ringland in relation to the Broadland Northway and NWL. This is an endless process that needs to be stopped and we seek a commitment in the Strategy not to begin the development of any more major road infrastructure schemes.

## 7.0 Chapter 6 – A zero carbon future

- 7.1 Climate change is an existential threat to humanity and transport contributes over half the carbon emissions in some parts of the area covered by the Strategy. No other public policy or transport objective is more important in achieving a zero carbon future or jeopardizing its achievement.
- 7.2 The net zero carbon policy in the strategy is very welcome. However, it needs to be translated into actions and currently the Strategy is lacking in specific commitment to the projects needed to make this happen. Much will rest on the work to follow through the action plan. In the meantime, the bulk of current planned spending on transport in this area is committed to major road building schemes that will induce further traffic. The Strategy does not therefore provide the evidence that would demonstrate that these schemes are compatible with the policy in the Strategy that echoes the imminent legal requirement that carbon emissions must be 78% lower by 2035 than 1990. Attached to this response in appendix 2 is the detail of response given by the portfolio holder for sustainable and inclusive growth about the NWL. At present the Strategy appears to fall short of meeting the tests set out.
- 7.3 There is a need to commit resources to developing a programme of ambitious schemes that will make it easier for people to walk, cycle and use public transport. The Norwich Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Bus Service Improvement Plan will provide lists of schemes for development. In the past, sustainable transport schemes have been hurriedly developed in response to government announcements inviting councils to bid for competitive funding at short notice. In contrast, the County has normally devoted most of its discretionary resources for scheme development to the design of new roads which it then presents to government for major scheme funding. The TfN Strategy needs to change this practice and commit to develop packages of sustainable transport schemes over a sensible period of gestation and present these for major scheme funding instead. The Strategy should introduce a commitment to monitor and report on the proportion of County Council resource directed to delivering sustainable transport measures.

## 8.0 Chapter 7 - Improving the quality of our air

- 8.1 We welcome the clear recognition in the Strategy that removing the toxins produced by burning fossil fuels in vehicles is needed to reduce harm to human health. The acknowledgement that firm regulatory measures are needed to tackle this (7.6) and that these could have collateral benefits for other transport policy objectives is also very welcome. A reference to enforcing engine switch off rules would be a useful addition in 7.8.



- 8.2 It would also be helpful if this section of the Strategy provided more information about what the regulatory tools are and their potential benefits and drawbacks. It would also be useful to set the broad criteria that would be used to select which is most effective. For example, it will be important to ensure that any workplace parking levy is introduced over a wide area so businesses do not relocate to the edge of the city and outcome that would be counterproductive by damaging the city centre and generating polluting traffic movements. A key criterion would be the ability to generate funds that can be invested in sustainable transport, thereby creating a virtuous cycle and providing more financial autonomy.
- 8.3 Norwich appears to be lagging behind many other cities in the provision of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. The government's decision to ban the sale of fossil fuel powered cars from 2030 makes it more urgent to provide more infrastructure. We will contribute to the electric vehicle strategy mentioned in 7.9 and have submitted an application for community infrastructure levy funding to install more charge points in City Council car parks.
- 8.4 The lungs of children are especially vulnerable to the effects of air pollution so the commitment in 7.9 to investigate concerns around air quality outside schools, monitor the air and introduce school streets is very welcome.
- 8.5 One a matter of factual accuracy the City Council, which is responsible for monitoring air quality, does not have the evidence to prove that high levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter have been identified along the primary routes into the city (7.3). This is because particulate pollution is only measured in Castle Meadow and Lakenfield, neither site is on a primary route into the city and neither has exceeded national objective levels.

## 9.0 Chapter 8 - Changing attitudes and behaviours

- 9.1 The content of chapter 8 is supported.

## 10.0 Chapter 9 - Supporting growth areas

- 10.1 The need to co-ordinate the planning of new development with transport is rightly recognized in 9.2. The current mechanisms to achieve this need to be strengthened by producing unified spatial policies that integrate planning and transport. We would like to see an action in the Strategy to explore the possibility of achieving this through a combination of design coding and amalgamating the next iterations of the Greater Norwich Local Plan and Transport for Norwich Strategy into a single document.
- 10.2 The Transforming Cities Fund programme and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan have embraced the concept of mobility hubs. Mobility hubs are places where shared and clean mobility services are brought

together in places where shops, services and higher density development are concentrated. The County will be seeking accredited status from the organization CoMoUK for the hubs it is creating. It is therefore odd that mobility hubs only receive a cursory mention in the introduction to chapter 12 and are not mentioned in chapter 9. There should be a clear policy commitment in the Strategy to build a comprehensive network of mobility hubs and include them on the key diagram referred to in 12.9. The word mobility hub should be used rather than transport hub in 9.8 to avoid confusion.

## 11.0 Chapter 10 - Meeting local needs

- 11.1 The section on road traffic harm reduction notes that progress on reducing casualties arising from road traffic accidents has stalled and that people continue to find road conditions too intimidating to walk and cycle. It is therefore welcome to see a commitment to continue the work to extend 20mph limits to residential neighbourhoods that do not currently benefit from these. However, this will leave places such as high streets and shopping parades that are at the heart of community life and where we want people to walk and cycle comfortably and safely outside 20mph areas. We therefore advocate that the policy should be changed to say that “20mph will be adopted as the default speed limit across the whole urban area with higher limits only on streets that have a strategic traffic function and do not have a strong residential and local service function. Where the street design does not currently support adherence to 20mph, engineering and enforcement measures will be implemented to achieve compliance.”
- 11.2 The cost of bus travel is a significant factor that discourages people from taking the bus, as mentioned in 12.11. Free bus passes for older people show how people can be encouraged not to drive through the availability of subsidised travel. We would like the Bus Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership to consider how the cost of bus travel of other groups can be reduced and for the supporting action under 12.4 to be reworded to: “consider social needs in relation to bus services, including the cost of travel”.

## 12.0 Chapter 11 - Reducing the dominance of traffic

- 12.1 The recognition that we have beautiful and sensitive historic buildings, streets, landscapes and ecology that can be harmed by transport interventions is very valuable. The policy says that we will “seek to” enhance these assets. This could be met by seeking to do something but failing. The policy should therefore be changed to read: “Transport regulation, capital projects and maintenance activities can profoundly affect our valuable heritage, landscape and ecological assets. Such transport activities will conserve and enhance these assets and achieve biodiversity net gain as required by environmental legislation.”

- 12.2 The policy committing to work on neighbourhood-based activities to reduce the impact of unnecessary traffic is very welcome. Defining the neighbourhoods will be key and in traffic terms there is a danger that neighbourhoods will be defined as a cell surrounded by busier and more strategically important roads, whereas high streets with considerable amounts of traffic are often the focal point for neighbourhoods. These too should have traffic dominance reduced.
- 12.3 The government recently amended the National Planning Policy Framework to include a requirement that trees should be planted in new developments. A new paragraph 131 was introduced that reads: "Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users."
- 12.4 It is currently very difficult to get the County to adopt streets with trees in them as highway and it expects district councils to own and maintain the trees even though district councils are not the highway authority and the County are responsible for other street trees. This needs to change. We seek a policy in the Strategy that is consistent with government policy that leads to the County taking a positive approach to the inclusion of street trees in schemes.

### 13.0 Chapter 12 - Making the transport system work as one

- 13.1 The importance of looking at traffic capacity in terms of the number of people who can use sections of the network rather than vehicles has important and positive implications for the design of schemes that will lead to the prioritization of buses, bikes and pedestrians which use space efficiently. To be clear and consistent we would like the word "just" to be removed from the road network and travel mode hierarchy policy and for the introductory point on the first page of the chapter to read "This particularly supports prioritising bus travel, cycling and walking rather than car traffic".
- 13.2 The reference in this section to the development of a travel mode hierarchy is welcome and complementary to the new approach to traffic capacity. However, by comparison with the detailed proposal for a modal hierarchy in our LTP response the draft policy in the Strategy is vague. We would like it to be changed to read: "We will adopt a road network and travel mode hierarchy that a) prioritises the mobility requirements of modes that use least energy, produce least pollution and promote most healthy activity; b) understands that the movement of people rather than

vehicles matters in evaluating congestion and traffic capacity; and c) recognises the place function as well as the movement function of different parts of the network.”

- 13.3 The section on bus services is vague. The reason for this may be that County, like all local transport authorities, is required by government to produce a Bus Improvement Plan by the end of October and have an enhanced partnership in place by June 2022. The reliability, coverage, pollution and affordability of bus services need to be improved through these mechanisms and if this does not prove effective the County should explore whether to seek bus franchising powers. Key commitments in the Bus Improvement Plan should be reflected in the final version of the Strategy.
- 13.4 This section contains a commitment to review off-street and on-street parking. This is a City Council function and our LTP response acknowledged the importance of this issue. We are happy to play our part in implementing this action following the adoption of the strategy.
- 13.5 The content of the active travel section is welcomed. However, the commitment to “promote” it in the policy and “prioritise” it in the key action needs need to be translated into the expenditure of time and money to avoid it being rhetoric. Given the government’s recognition that active travel schemes generally offer high value for money when built to the appropriate standard we therefore request that the policy is altered to read “We will prioritise active travel by walking and cycling in the allocation of resources by spending more capital on schemes that promote these modes of transport than on building new roads. Active travel schemes will be designed to conform to the standards in Local Transport Note 01/20 on cycling infrastructure design and the Healthy Streets checklist. The condition of cycling and walking infrastructure will be maintained to the highest standard possible on the active travel networks and zones recognized in the Norwich Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan”.
- 13.6 Maintenance of active travel infrastructure is important. At the moment parts of the pedalway network are becoming overgrown, paving is being replaced with patches of asphalt, cycle wayfinding is being left pointing in the wrong direction, segregation devices are not replaced after being struck by vehicles and cycle lanes and symbols are not repainted frequently enough. This is happening because the budgets for this maintenance activity are too small and the recognition of active travel networks are not give the same weight in maintenance procedures as the road network hierarchy. At the same time money that could have been spent on this maintenance is used to resurface new pieces of infrastructure such as the Broadland Northway. The County is proposing to build the Norwich Western Link that will create a liability to maintain nearly four more miles of dual carriageway and a viaduct at the same time as it is failing to maintain existing active travel infrastructure and is unwilling see new trees planted within the highway or new seats installed because it claims it cannot afford to pay for them. It is therefore welcome that the Strategy says “In accordance with our new Local Transport Plan policy, we will prioritise maintenance of those parts of the network used by people

walking and cycling. This will mean that the condition of cycle lanes and pavements on the most well-used routes is at the highest standard possible.” This aspect of our approach is so important that it should be elevated to the status of policy and linked to the LCWIP as mentioned above.

13.7 The County’s commitment to the retention of the post-pandemic recovery measures such as those implemented in Exchange Street and St Benedicts Street are welcome. It shows a new recognition that streets are spaces for socializing, living and commerce as much as conduits for movement. This is also reflected in the Places policy in chapter 11 and the Road Network and Travel Hierarchy in chapter 12.

#### 14.0 Chapter 13 - Making it happen

14.1 The current political governance arrangements are relatively recent creations following the ending of the highways agency agreement. The termination of the agreement not only dissolved a committee that had an equal County / City voting arrangement (albeit with the County having the casting vote) but teams at the City Council were disbanded and the personnel either left local government or transferred to County. This was a destructive and unnecessary act. We welcome the review of governance arrangements and will be seeking to ensure that the voice of Norwich City Council and its elected representatives is more powerfully heard in decisions affecting transport in the city.

14.2 The list of stakeholders at the start of chapter 13 needs to include other non-commercial interests such Norwich Cycling Campaign, Norwich Society and Norwich Access Group and Vision Norfolk.

14.3 More emphasis needs to be given in the strategy to raising locally determined revenue is and this needs to be mentioned in the context of regulatory tools such as a workplace parking levy, congestion charge or clean air zone. The system is too centralised at the moment with councils responding to challenge funds announced by the Department for Transport.

## **Appendix 2 - Answer given by Cllr Stonard to multiple public questions on the Norwich Western Link at Norwich City Council Cabinet meeting of 20 January 2021**

Thank you for the multiple questions about the city council's position on the proposed Norwich Western Link (NWL).

Clearly the Western Link scheme is a very major and controversial proposal and, if built, it will have significant implications for Norfolk's carbon emissions, its environment, traffic conditions across the city and economic activity in the north of the city. However, it should be remembered that the scheme proposed is entirely outside our administrative area and that the city council is not a transport authority. Therefore, we are not part of the decision making process on the NWL, which is entirely a county council matter.

The city council has always been consistent that any support for the scheme would be dependent on it being satisfied that certain conditions were fulfilled. This is consistent with the content of the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan that is on the agenda for consideration at this meeting. In particular, we have demanded that the NWL needs to be set in the context of a clear and environmentally progressive strategy for the development of transport in Norwich.

This strategy needs to be the foundation for a clearly defined and comprehensive set of schemes with funding attached which would demonstrate that, when viewed as a package, public transport, cycling and walking would be prioritised and promoted over the use of the private car. In particular, evidence of the decongestion benefits of the NWL in the city was sought as the basis for some of these measures to promote modal shift and road space reallocation.

Since the city council expressed conditional support for the strategic outline business case, almost no progress has been made on the Transport for Norwich Strategy, and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan has not been published for consultation. The award of £32m for the Transforming Cities Fund project last year was welcome but a far smaller award than the original high value package that would have been comparable in value to the estimated £153m cost of the NWL. We have as yet received no evidence that traffic levels in the city's streets will be eased in a way that would improve air quality or enable modal shift or road space reallocation as a result of the construction of the NWL.

In December, cabinet approved a detailed and considered response to the draft Local Transport Plan. At the time of writing this answer, we have not received an acknowledgement or a response to that submission, which was sent on 17 December. The response explained the types of principles and interventions that we would like to see implemented to improve transport in the city.

The city council's response to the Local Transport Plan sets out our bold and radical vision for transport in Norwich. It was drafted in the context of the Council's 2040 City Vision, the Covid-19 Recovery Plan and the Norwich City Centre Public Spaces Plan. It sets out thirteen policy principles, the very first of which is to respect climate limits. It supports the county's carbon neutrality

target of 2030 and proposes tough carbon reduction targets for transport, supported by an immediate and radical reduction in emissions. It demands that the Local Transport Plan should set a carbon budget for transport in Norfolk and Greater Norwich, supported by strong policies to contain emissions within that budget.

The second principle of the city council's bold vision for transport is that health and wellbeing and fairness must be at the centre of transport policy. Access to transport directly impacts life chances but it is the poorest in society who tend to live beside busy roads or in polluted city centres, with a consequent impact on life expectancy and general health and wellbeing, so transport must be clean and transport policy must promote social justice by reducing inequalities and promoting fairness.

The third policy principle is that non-car access from homes to places where people work, learn, shop and are entertained must be affordable. This will require an approach to land use and transport planning which creates compact mixed-use clusters and directs development and calibrates density towards them.

The city council's fourth principle is to prioritise the different modes of transport on the basis of efficient energy and space use. We need to continue to induce demand for more sustainable travel behaviour by designing Norwich around the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and buses. We propose the prioritisation of different modes of transport according to a hierarchy which is based on their energy efficiency, with walking and cycling at the very top.

There are a further nine policy principles for transportation in Norwich, which are freely available to peruse. They cover vital issues such as the equality impact of transport policy and design; the need to actively manage the delivery of goods, which has increased dramatically as a consequence of the rise of online shopping; the use of technology to support our goals; and the generation of revenue to invest in sustainable transport and to make us less reliant on central government grants.

Our ambitious transport vision also makes radical proposals of interventions for delivery, including a workplace parking levy; a gradual reduction in the space available for fossil fuel vehicles to park; the allocation of spaces for autonomous vehicles; the reallocation of road space and time from cars to more sustainable modes; measures to free the city centre and neighbourhoods from polluting vehicles; a reduction in traffic levels in the vicinity of schools; the setting of 20 mph as the default speed limit across Norwich; and the creation of Mobility Hubs, which would facilitate smooth transfers between shared and clean modes of transport and to ensure people can be confident that there are hubs places in the city where they can access and smoothly switch between buses, trains, car club vehicles and hire bikes.

All of these ambitious and radical policies and measures would transform the city into a safer, cleaner, more sustainable and more equitable place. This is now the city council's main focus for influencing the county council on transport matters.

But, this vision must be seen in the context of the city council's diminished influence on the development and implementation of transport policy and projects in and around the city. This reduced role is a direct consequence of the county council's unilateral decision to terminate the Highways Agency Agreement. Therefore, the city council can propose ambitious and radical policies and measures, but we no longer have any role in the decision-making and implementation process.

In terms of the Western Link, the termination of the Highways Agency Agreement and the diminution of the city council's role in transport matters has combined with a lack of progress on the part of the county council in developing a new transport strategy. This slowness has served to undermine our confidence that the county is serious about providing sufficient complementary measures to satisfy our conditions for supporting the project. As I say, the termination of the Highways Agency Agreement means the city council does not have a formal role in this process; a role which would have helped ensure confidence that such complementary transport policies and schemes in the city were being planned, funded and implemented in a timely way and as agreed.

However, our final position will await the outcome of work that is being undertaken to prepare for the submission of the planning application for the NWL and the adoption of the Transport for Norwich Strategy. On a decision as important as this it is only right that we wait until we are in full possession of all the relevant information.

In order for the city council to consider supporting the proposal we will need to see clear and convincing evidence of the NWL being a critical part of an environmentally progressive and deliverable transport strategy for the city delivering:

- considerable air quality and decongestion benefits in the city;
- a comprehensive investment package in public transport, cycling and walking that is commensurate with the investment being considered for the NWL capable of delivering against carbon reduction targets in the Paris agreement or any successor agreements;
- the completion of complementary schemes before the NWL is completed;
- a political mechanism to ensure that the governance is in place to ensure that these commitments are implemented; and
- evidence that the wildlife and landscape impacts of the scheme can be satisfactorily mitigated.

We are an evidence based council, which has consistently requested both the evidence and the answers to our questions before a decision of support could be considered. This evidence has not been forthcoming and we can only surmise why. However, meanwhile, the actions of the Tory-run county council have removed from the city any meaningful power in decision making on city transport and highways matters through the removal of the Highways Agency Agreement. But, we have not waited idly for the county council to respond.

Instead, our alternative is clear. We have produced a Norwich transport plan that is bold, radical, evidence based and decisive. If implemented, it would give our city a better future in making practical real life improvements to people's day to day transport needs while safeguarding our precious environment.



So, our message is simple, but I'll repeat it again for those who have chosen not to listen. If the Tories at county want us to change they'll need to answer the questions, provide the evidence, reinstate the Highways Agency, or something very much like it, deliver on our bold transport plan and give us a meaningful say in transport and highways matters in the city. Until then, just as before, we cannot consider support.