

Report for Resolution

Report to Norwich Highways Agency Committee
25 November 2010

Report of Head of transportation

Subject Transport improvement projects programme for 2010/11

10

Purpose

The purpose of the report is to ask members to endorse the provisional transport improvement projects programme for 2011/12 and to agree a mechanism for dealing with the uncertainty over the budget allocation.

Recommendations

Members are recommended to

1. Endorse the list of projects for submission for funding in 2011/12, and their relative priorities within that list.
2. Ask Norfolk County Council's cabinet to consider funding the schemes in priority order in the context of the final settlement from central government
3. Ask the Head of transportation to confirm to members the final content of the 2011/12 capital improvement programme, when Norfolk County Council's Cabinet has allocated funding

Financial Consequences

The financial consequences are discussed fully in the report and are dependant on the financial settlement that the County Council receives from Central Government.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Strong and prosperous city – working to improve quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the city now and in the future" and the service plan priority of delivering the local transport plan.

Contact Officers

Joanne Deverick

01603 212461

Background Documents

NHAC report and minutes Nov 2009, and minutes July 2010
Service Requests

Report

Background

1. Each year the November Committee agrees a draft programme for Transport Capital Improvement Projects for the following year as well as an indicative programme for the following year. This programme forms the basis for a bid for funding to the County Council's Cabinet and while the funding is never guaranteed until the Cabinet has approved the programme, in previous years officers have had a firm idea of what the annual budgets will be and have tailored the proposed programme to suit. This has resulted in all previous bids being fully funded.
2. This year the outlook is very different and at the time of writing, the budget allocations for 2011/12 are far from certain. Norfolk County Council is unlikely to have confirmation of their overall budget from the Department for Transport before the end of the year, with the Cabinet not finalising allocations until February 2011. There is also uncertainty over whether the settlement will be in the form of a grant or borrowing approval. If it is the latter the costs associated with borrowing may mean that the County Council may decide not to take up the offer. Any such decision would be informed by the County Council's Big Conversation consultation that is currently underway.
3. If decisions on next years programme are delayed until funding is confirmed this is likely to cause problems with continuity of workflow for both designers and contractors, with a shortage of work at the start of the year and a potential backlog at the end. It is therefore suggested that members agree a prioritised programme for 2011/12 and ask Cabinet to allocate funds based on that prioritisation. It is not proposed at this stage to consider any programme for 2012/13 given current budgetary uncertainty.

Potential Funding Levels

4. At the start of 2010/11, £1.37M was allocated to NHAC sponsored schemes. Additionally following the adoption of the NATS IP (NATS implementation plan) a further £500k was allocated to NATS schemes within the greater Norwich area. In June the coalition government announced a 25% in year cut in the Integrated Transport Grant reducing these figures to £1m and £375k respectively.
5. It is the belief of the officers that even the most optimistic settlement will not see funding levels on a par with the current year and they are likely to be considerably lower. This being the case it is suggested that the LTP / NATS element of funding for any individual scheme is capped at around £100k to ensure that funds can be spread across the City benefiting the maximum number of people and that the best value for money can be achieved.

Proposed Programme

6. The table attached as appendix 1 details the proposed list of schemes for consideration in 2011/12. The schemes identified are those where there is an

existing NHAC commitment, ones which were deferred as a result of the in year cut and ones that link with other live projects. The proposed programme also includes 2 new pedestrian crossing suggestions, taken from the current pedestrian crossing priority list. The pedestrian crossing programme is one that is particularly hit by the £100k cap as any standalone signalled crossing is likely to cost in excess of £100k, while a signalled junction improvement to provide pedestrian crossing facilities will be at least £200k

7. The only speed management scheme included in the list is the proposal for pedestrian refuges on Harvey Lane, which was one of the schemes that fell victim of the in year cut. No additional stand alone speed management schemes are proposed. Members will recall that the conclusion of the signed only 20mph speed limit in residential areas project resulted in officers being asked to review the speed management policy across the City. It was hoped that an interim policy would have been prepared for this meeting, however given the enormous uncertainty on future funding, it has not been possible to complete this in the timeframe. Until that policy is agreed it would be premature to propose any work on any traffic calming requests that have yet to be approved in principle.
8. Each proposed scheme within the programme has been allocated a priority class ranging from 1 to 5, with class 1 being the schemes that should be allocated funding first followed by class 2, class 3 etc. The priority is based on whether there is an NHAC commitment to complete the scheme, whether there are links to other projects and how many different benefits the schemes produce (e.g. casualty reduction, modal shift etc). The list also indicates whether the scheme is a local scheme or NATS scheme. In Norwich all proposed schemes seek to achieve the aims of the NATS strategy; for the purposes of this report a NATS scheme is one of strategic importance that will affect the wider population, while a local scheme has a much more targeted audience. In terms of funding, local schemes would be funded by the Norwich allocation in the LTP, while NATS schemes could be funded either by the Norwich or the NATS allocation.
9. Appendix 2 gives details of each of the proposed schemes.
10. In addition to the LTP funded schemes within the City planned for 2011/12 there are the Growth Point funded improvement schemes on Dereham Road that are part of the BRT (bus rapid transit) scheme for that corridor. This is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.

Location	Brief Description	Ward	Funding Required (£1000s')	Confirmed Other Funding		Could be funded by NATS budget	Cumulative Total	Priority Class	Previous / Future funding and other commitments
				Amount	Source				
Newmarket Road Eaton Road Junction	Modifications to the junction to improve capacity to stop queues blocking back to the Outer Ring Road junction and to provide more waiting space for pedestrians.	Eaton	100	80	Signal Up grade	Y	100	1	If improvement scheme is not combined with the signal upgrade scheme, the cost of the improvement scheme will increase significantly and disruption to the travelling public will be increased.
Chapelfield North Public Transport Improvements	Making Chapelfield North two way for buses and access vehicles, and associated city centre improvements	M'croft	100	~250	S106	Y	200	1	Feasibility work on the scheme is nearing completion and detailed design work is required to enable a bid for funding from external sources to be completed. Some scope for reducing the HA funding if necessary
City Centre	Standardising Loading and Cycling Times in Pedestrianised areas	M'croft / Thorpe Hamlet	50			Y	250	1	Public commitment in NATS IP. Feasibility work is currently underway. Some scope for reducing HA funding, but this would delay implementation
City Wide	Annual Waiting Restrictions, including waiting restrictions identified as part of CPZ consultation	Many	40			N	290	2	Consultation has taken place so there is a public expectation that schemes will be implemented.

Location	Brief Description	Ward	Funding Required (£1000s')	Confirmed Other Funding		Could be funded by NATS budget	Cumulative Total	Priority Class	Previous / Future funding and other commitments
				Amount	Source				
Minor Works	Miscellaneous small schemes (barriers / bollards / signs) up at a max value of £5k per site	Many	50			N	340	2	Annual sum used for minor improvement works. With a reduction in funding for bigger schemes this becomes increasingly important.
City Centre	Contra Flow cycle lanes	M'croft Thorpe Hamlet	60			Y	400	2	Feasibility work is currently underway
Connect 2 links in Yarmouth Road	Cycle facilities to link to the proposed new bridge at Whitlingham	Thorpe Hamlet	10	37	EEDA	Y	410	2	Funding will demonstrate the Local Authorities commitments to the Connect 2 project and will help unlock the £900k Sustrans funding for the bridge
Constitution Hill / Magdalen Road	Measures to slow vehicle speeds on the approach to a recently introduced zebra crossing	Sewell	20			N	430	2	A zebra crossing was introduced in 2009/10, and has not had the desired speed reduction effect. Additional measures are required to satisfy safety audit.
Marriott's Way to Oval Road	Create a footpath / cycle route linking the 2	Wens	65			Y	495	3	Links to Dereham Road BRT scheme, could be deferred if necessary
Bus Infrastructure	Improvements to bus stops and shelters	Many	70			N	565	3	Links to the bus shelter contract relet, size of the budget could be reduced if necessary

Location	Brief Description	Ward	Funding Required (£1000s')	Confirmed Other Funding		Could be funded by NATS budget	Cumulative Total	Priority Class	Previous / Future funding and other commitments
				Amount	Source				
Whitefriars	Conversion of existing signalled crossing to a zebra, along with associated traffic calming.	M'croft / Thorpe Hamlet	75			N	640	3	Local safety scheme to address the history of accidents involving vulnerable users. Will link with the new zebra crossing on Whitefriars that is jointly funded by LTP and S106, due for completion in March 2011
Wilberforce Road Area	New footpath between Wilberforce Road and Friends Road	Uni	40			N	680	3	Raised as a public question in NHAC, could be deferred if necessary
Harvey Lane	Series of Pedestrian Refuges to reduce speeds and aid crossing	Thorpe Hamlet	60			N	740	4	Deferred from 2010/11 due to 25% in year cut. Could be further deferred
Bluebell Road by North Park Avenue	Pedestrian and Cycle Crossing.	Uni	60			N	800	4	No commitment - Could be deferred if necessary
Ipswich Road by Tuckswood Road	Pedestrian Crossing facility between Tuckswood Road and Shell garage	L'ham	50			N	850	4	No commitment - Could be deferred if necessary

Location	Brief Description	Ward	Funding Required (£1000s')	Confirmed Other Funding		Could be funded by NATS budget	Cumulative Total	Priority Class	Previous / Future funding and other commitments
				Amount	Source				
Airport to City Centre Cycle Route	Create a strategic cycle route between the City Centre and the Airport and its' surrounding industrial areas.	Many	60	92	S106	Y	910	4	Feasibility work funded in 2010/11. Scheme is a priority for regeneration in the Northern Suburbs, but S106 could be used to start implementation works in 2011/12, with HA money following in 2012/12

Appendix 2

Details of Scheme Proposals

Newmarket Road / Eaton Road Signalled Junction – Priority Class 1

The signals at this junction are due to be replaced as part of the signal upgrade scheme in 2011/12. As with other junctions in the upgrade programme the opportunity has been taken to look at whether other improvements can be made at the same time to achieve economies of scale and value for money. It had been hoped that a pedestrian phase could be achieved on all four arms of the junction but given the narrowness of the footpaths and the number of utilities located in the footpath this has not proved possible. However a major capacity improvement has been identified which by banning the right turn from Newmarket Road into Leopold Road will provide a 2 lane exit out of the City. Computer modelling indicates that this will reduce the queuing back across the Newmarket Road / Daniels Road roundabout easing congestion on the Outer Ring Road. It will also improve journey times for buses travelling out of the City.

Design work for this project has taken place during the current financial year and a detailed report is expected to be presented to your January meeting

Main Benefits – Reduced congestion, improved public transport reliability, safer journeys to schools.

Chapelfield North Public Transport Improvements – Priority Class 1

Feasibility work is progressing on the proposal to make Chapelfield North two way for buses, service vehicles and cyclists. Early indications are that the scheme is feasible, with the necessary highway improvements being achievable within the existing public highway and without adversely affecting capacity on the main road network. It is expected that bus journey times for the services to and from the west of the city could be reduced by around 2 minutes by providing the route, along with a much needed increase in the number of bus stops required to service the city centre. The scheme would enable other city centre improvements to be undertaken..

A full report on this project is due to be presented to committee early in 2011.

Main Benefits – Improved public transport reliability, economic regeneration, environmental improvements, modal shift

City Centre Standardisation of Loading and Cycling Times in Pedestrianised Areas – Priority Class 1

A stated aim of the NATS IP was to standardise the loading and cycling times within the pedestrianised streets in the City Centre. As well as providing clarity to the public it will provide the opportunity to reduce signing clutter. It will also make enforcement of any restrictions easier.

Feasibility work on this project has started and a report on the detailed proposals due to be presented to committee early in 2011

Main Benefits – Modal shift, environmental improvements, economic regeneration

Waiting Restrictions – Priority Class 2

In September each year you agree a batch of waiting restrictions to be advertised for implementation in the following spring. This year's batch has already been advertised and so here is a public expectation that they will be implemented. In addition, in the report on this agenda about the CPZ consultation you were asked to agree to advertise other waiting restrictions, and the intention is that this budget would fund their implementation.

Main Benefits – Improved safety, reduced congestion

Minor Works – Priority Class 2

In previous years there have been 3 different minor works budgets; cycling, safer and healthy journeys to schools and general. It is proposed to combined these into one pot and for the money to be used on minor highway improvement schemes, such as bollards, barriers, cycle stands or dropped kerbs) up to the value of £5k.

Main Benefits – Improved safety, modal shift

Contra Flow Cycle Lane – Priority Class 2

In order to make cycling more attractive and convenient in the City Centre where possible it is hoped to convert all one way streets to two way use for cyclists. Feasibility work on a programme for this has started and a report is due to be presented to committee early in 2011, including the details of the first scheme identified on Duke Street.

Main Benefits - Modal shift

Connect 2 links on Yarmouth Road - Priority Class 2

The Lottery funded Sustrans Connect2 network is focussed on the proposed bridge between the Deal Ground and Utilities sites. Much of the Connect2 network would be delivered by these developments before March 2013. The remaining parts of the Connect2 network are on public highway and require funding. EEDA have provided funds for 2010-11 to implement cycling improvements along Thorpe Road. Design fees are required to progress other proposals on the Connect2 network. This will demonstrate to The Lottery and Sustrans that the Local Authorities are committed to complete the scheme.

Main Benefits - Modal shift, economic regeneration

Constitution Hill / Magdalen Road - Priority Class 2

In 2009/10 a zebra crossing was introduced at the junction of Constitution Hill / Magdalen Road and Denmark Road, along with some kerb re-alignments and a 20mph speed limit. Since these were introduced the speeds on the southbound approach to the crossing have remained high with an average speed of approx 28mph; 20mph limits are only permitted where average speeds are at or below 24mph. Therefore it is recommended that some additional features are provided on Constitution Hill to reduce the approach speed.

Main Benefits – Modal Shift, Improved Safety.

Marriott's Way to Oval Road Pedestrian and Cycle Link - Priority Class 3

Marriott's Way is a well used pedestrian and cycle route to the northwest of the city that follows the line of the old M&GN railway line. Between the end of Oval Road and Marriott's Way there is an unmade but well worn muddy link that has been created over years of informal use. It is proposed to provide a shared use footpath cycle way at this location.

This will complement the proposed works at the Dereham Road / Norwich Road junction described in the report about the Dereham Road BRT scheme, and will provide a valuable link from the north east of the city to the facilities in the southwest, such as the university, hospital and research park.

Main Benefits - Modal shift

Bus Infrastructure - Priority Class 3

Each year there is annual budget for bus infrastructure. This funds new bus stops, hardstandings etc, and in the current year funded the experimental waiting restrictions in the Northfields area that were implemented to ease the passage of buses. Funds will be required in 2011/12 to review that experimental scheme. In addition it is likely that the bus shelter contract re-let that the City Council is due to complete in July 2011 will require changes to the position and layout of some bus stops in the City.

Main Benefits - Modal shift

Whitefriars – Priority Class 3

The Jarrolds' redevelopment of their former print works provided funding to convert the existing pedestrian refuge on Whitefriars into a zebra crossing. As part of the development work for that scheme the casualty record for Whitefriars was examined and was discovered to be higher than the national average. With the plan to introduce one zebra crossing it was considered that there would be benefits in replacing the existing signalled crossing with a zebra crossing, and that both crossings should be on raised tables, along with an additional raised table by Pigg Lane. A similar approach was adopted on St Andrews when the signalled crossing was removed, resulting in the significant reduction in the accident rate.

Main Benefits - Modal shift, casualty reduction

Footpaths in Wilberforce Road Area - Priority Class 3

Members may recall that earlier this year a resident of West Earlham brought to the committees attention the need for some additional footpaths in the Wilberforce Road area, where there were routes worn through the grass verges. Funding is sought to provide these

Main Benefits - Modal shift

Harvey Lane Pedestrian Refuges - Priority Class 4

In the bid report last year a scheme for a series of pedestrian refuges on Harvey Lane to reduce vehicle speeds and aid crossing movements was included in the provisional programme for 2011/12. Subsequent to the meeting additional funding was identified and the scheme was brought forward to the current year. However when the 25% cuts were announced in June the scheme then had to be removed from the programme for the current year.

Local members have campaigned for many years for vehicle speeds to be reduced in Harvey Lane, and under the old assessment method the route was the highest priority.

Main Benefits - Modal shift, improved safety

Bluebell Road by North Park Avenue - Priority Class 4

A local member on behalf of a resident requested that an assessment be made of the need for some form of crossing on Bluebell Road in the vicinity of North Park Avenue. A significant number of pedestrians and cyclists cross at this location and using the standard assessment method the site ranked as top priority for provision of facilities.

The exact form of crossing will be determined as part of the design process, but it is not believed that a signalled crossing would be necessary. Any measure provided would have the advantage of slowing vehicle speeds on Bluebell Road.

Main Benefits - Modal shift, improved safety

Ipswich Road by Tuckswood Lane - Priority Class 4

The school travel plan for Eaton CNS has identified the need for some form of crossing on Ipswich Road. There is currently a signalled crossing near the entrance to Lyhart Road and there are full pedestrian facilities at the Ipswich Road / Daniels Road junction, however for pupils from the Tuckswood Lane and Maid Marion Road areas both these crossings are away from their desire line.

It is suggested that a pedestrian refuge is provided between Tuckswood Lane and the Shell garage. This can safely be located close to the existing bus stops and will have the added benefit that bus users can also use the crossing.

Using the standard assessment method his site ranks as 12th on the pedestrian crossing priority list, however in terms of sites that do not require a signalled crossing or junction improvement it is 3rd behind Bluebell Road and Grove Road outside the shops.

Main Benefits - Modal shift, improved safety

Airport to City Centre Cycle Link - Priority Class 4

Design work is currently underway to identify a cycle route between the employment areas around the Airport with the City Centre. The complete scheme is estimated to cost around £150k. The City Council currently has £92k S106 funding available to implement parts of the route, but a further £60k is required to complete the project. This scheme has been given the priority class 5 as it would be possible to spend the S106 monies in 2011/12 and seek LTP funding for the remainder in 2012/13, if necessary.

Main Benefits - Modal shift