

Report to Norwich Highways Agency committee
16 March 2017
Report of Head of city development services
Subject Transport for Norwich - St Crispins shared use crossing

Item

11

Purpose

To consider the results of the consultation linked to the wider Transport for Norwich scheme for a wide conspicuous at grade crossing over St Crispins Road from St Georges Street to Botolph Street and to agree implementation of the scheme.

Recommendation

That the committee:

- (1) agrees to approve the design and implementation of the scheme to improve the existing cycling facilities, and improve the provision for cyclists & pedestrians across St Crispin's Road as shown on Plan Nos. PE4112-HP-7000-001 PR GENERAL ARRANGEMENT attached in Appendix 1.
- (2) approves the installation of a signal controlled crossing required as part of the scheme.
- (3) notes that the subway, which was stopped up (highway rights removed) in 2009 as part of redevelopment proposals will be filled in.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority a safe, clean and low carbon city and the service plan priority to implement the Local Transport Plan and Norwich Area Transportation Strategy.

Financial implications

The budget for the scheme is £900,000 to be funded from the Cycle City Ambition Grant from the Department for Transport.

Ward/s: Mancroft

Cabinet member: Councillor Bremner - Environment and sustainable development

Contact officers

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Background documents

Consultation responses

Report

Scheme Objectives and Benefits

1. The route yellow pedalway crosses the ring road at St Crispins and currently cyclists and pedestrians have no specific crossing facility other than to use the subway which is no longer public highway, after highway rights were extinguished by the Secretary of State in 2009 as part of proposals to substantially redevelop the area at the time. The current subway route is unattractive, indirect and brings cyclists into conflict with pedestrians. In order to make the yellow pedalway more attractive an 'at grade' crossing of the ring road is needed.
2. The key objective of this scheme is to provide a wide, conspicuous and direct at grade crossing over St Crispins Road in order to facilitate easy pedestrian and cycle movements across the inner ring road between St George's Street and Botolph Street.
3. This arrangement will tie in with redevelopment proposals that are currently under discussion for the Anglia Square area. Weston Homes in association with Columbia Threadneedle have appointed Broadway Malyan to prepare an overarching vision for the site that includes an improved retail offer, an aspiration to deliver around 1000 new homes and improved connectivity within the site. In particular this will strengthen the north south route that links St Georges Street, across this new pedestrian and cycle crossing through the site to link with Edward Street. This route will significantly enhance access from the north of the city to the City Centre for pedestrians and cyclists and the new crossing will provide a much enhanced 'gateway' into the regenerated area.
4. The subway will be filled in and wing walls removed allowing the space to be used for planted areas and segregated cycling and walking paths to the north and south of St Crispins Road. The subway is being removed rather than retained in parallel with the crossing for the following reasons:
 - (a) It has already been legally extinguished as a public highway.
 - (b) The subway attracts anti-social and criminal behaviour and these would become even worse if (as expected) very few people used the subway when the new crossing exists.
 - (c) Removing the subway and its approaches releases land that can be used to improve the alignment of paths and improve the environment in the area.
 - (d) The subway is difficult for people with mobility problems to use because it involves ascending and descending ramps and steps.
 - (e) There is an ongoing revenue budget implication involved in cleaning, repairing, lighting and pumping water out of the subway.

Consultation

5. The proposals were presented to the Norwich Cycling Campaign (NCC) and the Norfolk & Norwich Association for the Blind (NNAB) on the 13 October. The NCC support the proposal subject to some design improvements during detailed design. The NNAB are opposed to the scheme as they believe it disadvantages the partially or non-sighted by comparison to the subway.

6. The public consultation started on 19 December to 17 January with notices on site at the underpass and 377 letters and plans delivered to residents and businesses in the area. This followed on from exhibitions and consultations hosted by the developers, Weston Homes in association with Columbia Threadneedle during November and December 2016. The plan used for the consultation is attached as appendix 1.
7. The details of the consultation were publicised as a media release and a consultation page hosted by Norfolk County Council & Norwich City Council.

Responses

8. Nine responses were received, 2 in support and 7 raising concerns or objecting to the proposal. The responses are summarised in Appendix 2, along with an officer response and the more substantive responses are reproduced in full in Appendix 3.
9. The main concerns related to the loss of the existing subway. However, as explained earlier in the report, the decision that the subway is to be removed has already been made and the consultation is about the form of an alternative crossing. Nationally many people find subways and underpasses intimidating and a source of anti-social behaviour and welcome crossings that are at grade.
10. It is recognised that to some vulnerable groups a completely traffic free route is preferable, but in this instance it is not physically possible to retain a subway and provide an at grade crossing. The existing subway is approached in both directions from very busy roads and in the case of Duke Street very narrow footpaths. The new crossing will link a traffic free route through the Anglia Square development to a very lightly traffic St Georges Street. Both of these routes will be significantly better for both pedestrians and cyclists.
11. Concerns have been expressed about the effect of a signalled crossing on the roundabout of St Crispins with Duke Street. However the traffic modelling demonstrates that the effects on the roundabout will be minimal with an increase of journey times between 9 and 14 seconds at peak times.

Timescales

12. If approved, it is anticipated that the scheme will be constructed early in 2018.

Conclusion

13. The project is rooted in strategy documents that have been adopted by Norwich City and Norfolk County Councils and the proposals will meet the requirements of the brief by providing benefits to cyclists and pedestrians. The proposals as presented would provide the next phase of improvement on the yellow pedalway and will improve this section of the cycle network to provide a facility that is safer and more pleasant to use and create landscaping opportunities to link to the new Anglia Square development.

Resource Implications

14. Finance: The TfN programme forms an integral part of strategic infrastructure as set out in the Joint Core Strategy. The delivery of this work is funded by government grants by way of the City Cycle Ambition programme and Section 106 funding.
15. Staff: The project will be delivered through joint team working involving both county council and city council officers.
16. Property: The proposals cannot be provided within the existing highway boundary. Adjacent land is owned by the Anglian Square developers and will need to be dedicated as public highway.
17. IT: None.

Other implications

18. Legal Implications: None
19. Human Rights: None.
20. Communications: Transport for Norwich programme updates are issued monthly to inform the public and stakeholders of current schemes and future programme

Section 17 - Crime and Disorder Act

21. The scheme will be designed to ensure it has a positive effect on crime and disorder where possible. Care will be taken during construction to minimise opportunities for crime and disorder, for instance the secure storage of construction equipment and materials.

Risk Implications/Assessment

22. A risk assessment has been undertaken for development of the NATS Implementation Plan (TfN). The key risks for delivering this are around funding, timescales and planning. These risks are being managed through active project management and ongoing engagement with stakeholders.
23. A risk register is being maintained as part of the technical design and construction delivery processes.
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Integrated impact assessment



NORWICH
City Council

Report author to complete

Committee:	Norwich Highways Agency Committee
Committee date:	16 March 2017
Director / Head of service	City Development Service
Report subject:	PE4112 St Crispins shared use crossing - yellow cycle rout
Date assessed:	1 February 2017
Description:	This report is to be presented to NHAC for approval to desidn and implement the proposals following consultation for delivery early 2018 of a shared use crossing across the inner ring road at St Crispins and removal of the redundant subway to improve the yellow pedal way to Anglia Square area.

	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	none
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	landscape team
ICT services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	none
Economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	increasing route usage to Anglia Square
Financial inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	none
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	removal of subway will reduce crime
Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	none
Health and well being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	encourage more sustainable transport

	Impact			
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Relations between groups (cohesion)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	none
Eliminating discrimination & harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	removal of subway will discourage harassment
Advancing equality of opportunity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	One of the main objectives derived from the TfN strategy is to increase walking and cycling and the strategy follows a mode hierarchy principal where walking, cycling and public transport are, where appropriate, prioritised above use of the car. These proposals form part of that overall package as it provides a priority cycle route into the city centre, promoting the use of sustainable travel methods. This new facility will encourage more sustainable transport modes
Natural and built environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	opportunity for landscaping
Waste minimisation & resource use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	none
Pollution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The provision of these footway/cycleway improvements helps to promote the use of sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling

	Impact			
Sustainable procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	none
Energy and climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	none
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Risk management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A risk assessment has been undertaken for the development of the NATS Implementation Plan (TfN). The key risks for delivering this are around funding, planning and timescales. These risks are being managed through active project management and ongoing engagement with stakeholders

Recommendations from impact assessment

Positive

The route yellow pedal way crosses the ring road at St Crispin's and currently cyclists and pedestrians have no specific crossing facility other than to use the subway which is no longer public highway, after highway rights were in 2009 as part of proposals to substantially redevelop the area at the time.

The current subway route is unattractive, indirect and brings users into conflict with pedestrians. In order to make the yellow pedal way more attractive an 'at grade' crossing of the ring road is needed. The key objective of this scheme is to provide a wide, conspicuous and direct at grade crossing over St Crispin's Road in order to facilitate easy pedestrian and cycle movements across the inner ring road between St George's Street and Botolph Street. The subway will be filled in and wing walls removed allowing the space to be used for planted areas and segregated cycling and walking paths to the north and south of St Crispin's Road.

Negative

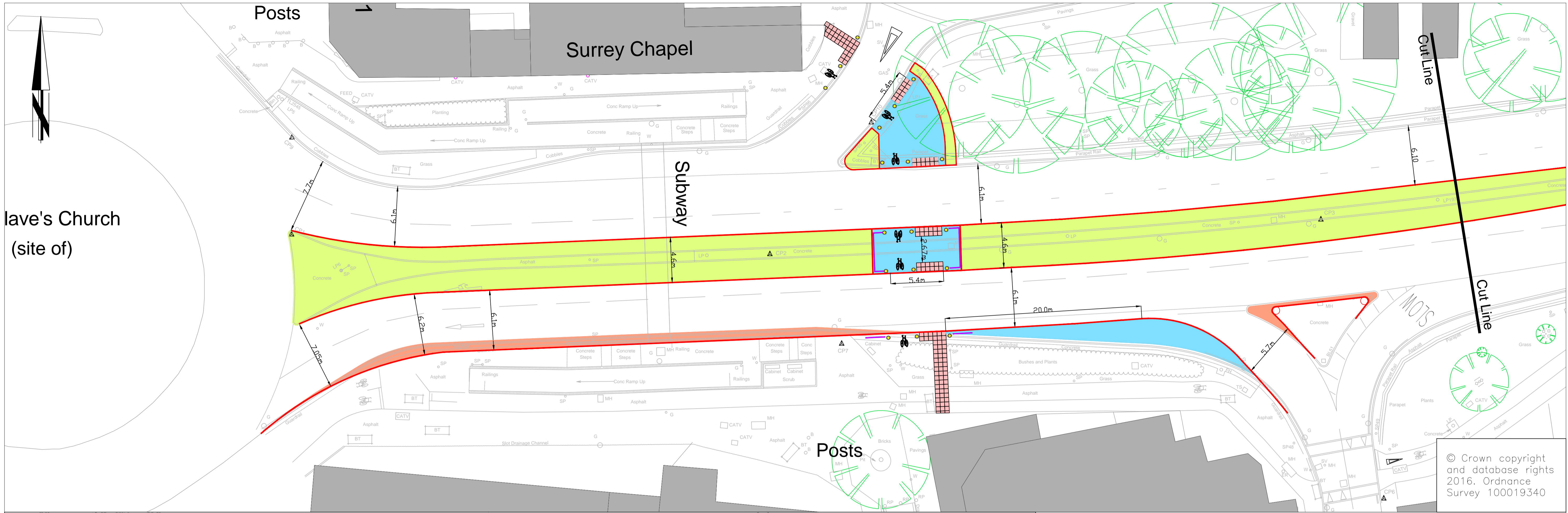
no issues identified

Neutral

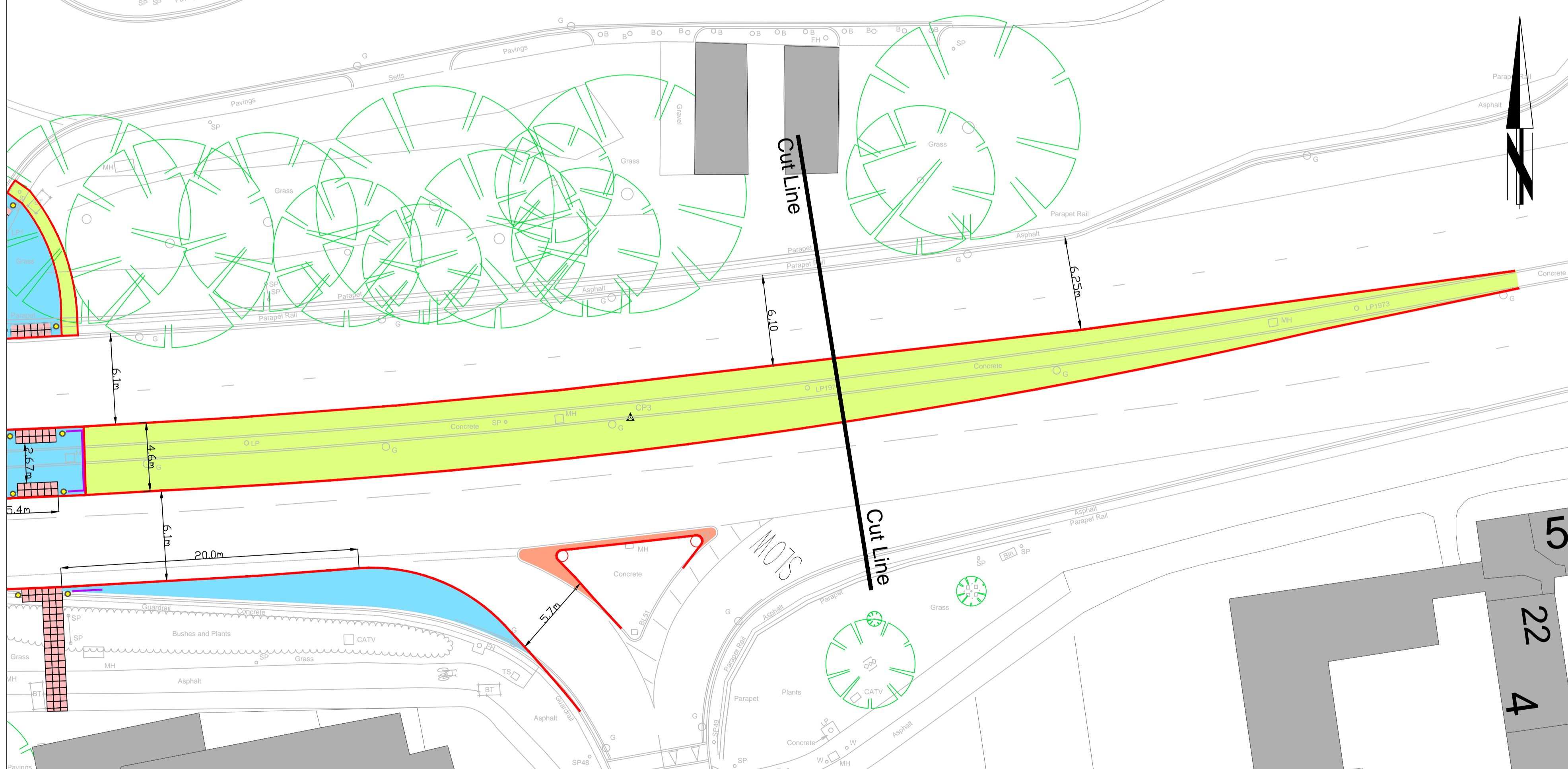
no comments

Issues

no comments



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- KEY**
- New footway surface, excavate 200mm deep verge, inlay 150mm type 4 sub-base followed by 50mm thick surface HRA
 - New Carriageway Haunch
 - New Verge Area to be created
 - New PCC kerbing to be installed to NCD standard detail 1100-4 Rev B
 - Tactile slabs to be installed to NCD standard detail 1100-08
 - Install new Type V4 Pedestrian guard railing
 - New Traffic Signal

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REV.	DESCRIPTION	CHECKED	DATE

	INITIALS	DATE	DRAWING No.
SURVEYED BY	OS	04/16	PE4112-HP-7000-001 PR
DESIGNED BY	TAV	09/16	PROJECT TITLE
DRAWN BY	TAV	09/16	PE4112 St Crispins Transport for Norwich
CHECKED BY	PR	09/16	SCALE 1:200 @A1 FILE No. PE4112

Appendix 2
Summary of consultation responses

Respondent	Issue raised	Officer response
Norwich Cycling Campaign	<p>In support. Queries around signal timings, central refuge dimensions and the suitability of a third stage crossing at Botolph St. Issues raised about the Calvert Street junction and signage and surface between Duke St and Magdalen St.</p>	<p>Close liaison with Threadneedle has begun to design out the third crossing at Botolph Street and provide the direct link from this crossing to Edward Street. Timings of that development may preclude this in the short term however.</p> <p>The detailed design and stage 2 safety audit will design out the detailed issues raised.</p>
Royal National Institute of Blind People	<p>Objection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is not as safe for blind & partially sighted as the subway • Central reservation is too small to accommodate the peak pedestrian numbers. • Final alignment with Botolph St must be carefully considered • The design needs to include audio & visual clues at all crossings with sufficient time for pedestrians with mobility issues • The design must provide sufficient segregation with tactile rather than visual clues to the shore line. 	<p>The design will be undertaken to current standards and the higher volume of disabled and visually impaired users will be accommodated. Further dialogue with the RNIB is welcomed to refine the design to ensure needs are catered for, wherever possible. However retaining the existing subway is not an option as the highway rights were extinguished in 2009.</p>

Appendix 2
Summary of consultation responses

Respondent	Issue raised	Officer response
<p>Norfolk Norwich Association of the Blind</p>	<p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe, direct route will be replaced by longer, more complex 3 legged crossing • The volume of users will have a negative impact on traffic congestion & increase pollution. • Three legged crossing will dissuade cyclists who use the current roundabout • Segregation is unclear on the approaches to the crossing • Consultation felt rushed over the Christmas period • Temptation for pedestrians to chance a crossing when traffic is stationary at peak times on the roundabout approach. • The crossing provision should be linked to the Anglia Square development which is some years off. • High costs – Could the budget be spent on alternatives. 	<p>The light controlled third stage of the crossing on Botolph Street will be in operation until the Anglia Square development remodels this area with a more direct route into and through the new development. As the detailed design progresses further thought will be given to the necessity of including this element.</p> <p>The traffic model shows a small increase in queue length and an additional journey time of 9 -14 seconds at peak times based on the surveyed pedestrian flows and traffic data. The signals at the St Crispin's roundabout will be linked to the crossing to minimise queues.</p> <p>The design will be undertaken to current standards and the higher volume of disabled and visually impaired users will be accommodated. It is noted that confident cyclists may continue to use the roundabout however the crossing will open up the route to more, less confident cyclists. The consultation was in line with statutory requirements and followed the developer's initial public event.</p> <p>The NNAB were involved in the process in October, however further dialogue with the NNAB is welcomed to refine the design to ensure needs are catered for</p> <p>The budget is for providing a high quality cycle crossing of the inner ring road at this location and cannot be spent elsewhere.</p>

Appendix 2
Summary of consultation responses

Respondent	Issue raised	Officer response
Norwich Access Group	<p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subway is a safe convenient route for disabled people • Underpass does not affect traffic flows • Costs unjustified 	<p>The design will be undertaken to current standards and the higher volume of disabled and visually impaired users will be accommodated. Further dialogue with the NAG is welcomed to refine the design to ensure needs are catered for.</p>
City Cllr –.	<p>Objection</p> <p>The budget would be better allocated to other schemes and maintenance within the city</p>	<p>The project is rooted in strategy documents that have been adopted by Norwich City and Norfolk County Councils and the proposals will meet the requirements of the brief by providing benefits to cyclists and pedestrians. The proposals as presented would provide the next phase of improvement on the yellow pedalway and will improve this section of the cycle network to provide a facility that is safer and more pleasant to use and create landscaping opportunities to link to the new Anglia Square development. The budget cannot be spent on maintenance schemes</p>
Resident of Golden Dog Lane	Supports the proposal	Support welcomed

Appendix 2
Summary of consultation responses

Respondent	Issue raised	Officer response
Resident	Objection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles with the existing crossing on Barn Road and feels this proposal will be worse. 	The design is in accordance with all the latest Department for Transport guidance and meets all the current accessibility criteria.
Resident of Sussex Street	Objection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing will not be as quick and convenient as the underpass • Consultation were not distributed widely enough 	<p>Existing underpass is no longer highway and retaining it is not an option going forward. The new crossing will improve linkages to the Anglia Square area and provide a much more direct route, both to Anglia Square, and the north of the City.</p> <p>The consultation was in line with statutory requirements and followed the developer's initial public event. It is unrealistic to write to all potential users of the crossing. Instead site notices advertised the proposal to users.</p>
Resident	Objects to the closure of the subway	The highway rights of the subway have already been extinguished and there is no longer a right of way through it. The toucan crossing provides a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the inner ring road

Norwich Cycling Campaign – response to consultation

St Crispins Road Toucan Crossings

1. We welcome the 'at grade' crossing to replace the inadequate subway. This could become part of a valuable and attractive route to and from the city centre.
2. We welcome the improvements to and the separation of the cycle paths, on both sides of the road. The improvements should extend further on the south side.
3. However, a one stage crossing is an essential here because a three stage crossing is a very poor facility. Unless people are going to be asked to wait a significant time in the middle of the road and thereby congregate in larger numbers, a one stage crossing would be no disadvantage to traffic flow. How is the phasing of the lights proposed to work?
4. Also, the width of the central island as planned is not adequate for more than a handful of standard bicycles and pedestrians. It should be at least 2.8 metres. What are the dimensions for these plans?
5. The stage on the north side is problematic because no-one knows whether the proposed development will be any more tangible than the last two proposals. The current developers are proposing to develop in phases and to start at Edward Street. This third stage should be a priority to be eliminated when this area is finally developed and the developers should be required to provide a good connection into the area and an attractive through route. In the meantime, there is a problem with cars coming from the roundabout at speed but there is room to give cycles and pedestrians priority with the crossing on a raised table rather than face another wait.
6. The cyclepath crossing over Calvert Street is currently hazardous because cars turn from the flyover at speed and visibility is poor for the cyclist, especially travelling westwards. The opportunity should be taken to improve sight lines and review the turn radius.
7. The opportunity should be taken to improve the surface and signage on the existing cycle path from Duke Street to Magdalen Street.
8. Please confirm that the scheme has been designed in accordance with the London Design Standard.

Submission to Norwich City Council: St Crispin's shared use crossing

January 2017

Submission made by Michael Wordingham, RNIB Regional Assistant Campaigns Officer, East of England.

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) is the largest organisation of blind and partially sighted people in the UK and the UK's leading charity providing information, advice and support to almost two million people with sight loss. RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) is a membership organisation with over 24,000 members throughout the UK and 80 per cent of our Trustees and Assembly members are blind or partially sighted.

There are an estimated 34,970 people living with sight loss in Norfolk. Of this total, 4,750 are living with severe sight loss (blindness). By 2020 the number of people living with sight loss in Norfolk is projected to have increased to 48,410; and the number of people with severe sight loss will have increased to 6,820.¹

RNIB is privileged to have officers based in each of the England regions, who are in the unique position to work with blind and partially sighted people locally, to challenge a range of issues; from street obstacles and social care, to transport and support at the time of diagnosis.

RNIB is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

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The current subway provides a safe and convenient segregated walk way that is easy to navigate for blind and partially sighted people. The lack of detailed evidence or figures in the NHAC regarding the the subway attracting anti-social and criminal behaviour and costs of upkeep, make it impossible to form an opinion on the validity of this argument. It is likely that a great deal of work could be done to improve the subway and maintain it for a long time for less than the cost of the proposed crossings.

The proposed crossing scheme is not as safe and easy to navigate as the subway for blind and partially sighted people. It will also extend journey times for all pedestrians and cyclists. The three part nature of the crossing will be intimidating and difficult to navigate. The central reservation on St Crispin's, even at 5.4m, is likely to become congested with bicycles, push chairs and mobility scooters and certain times of the day. This will make it very difficult, disorientating and dangerous for blind and visually impaired people.

¹ RNIB Sight Loss Data Tool, <http://www.rnib.org.uk/knowledge-and-research-hub-key-information-and-statistics/sight-loss-data-tool>

The final alignment of the Botolph Street crossing point as it stands must be very carefully considered as it is so close to the turning from St Crispin's. As the development of Anglia Square continues consultation must be ongoing regarding this crossing.

There must be an Equality Impact Assessment carried out to assess how many people will avoid making journeys as a result of this new scheme.

Each crossing must have the required audio, visual and tactile cues for letting people know when it is safe to cross.

The crossings must leave sufficient time for people with mobility difficulties to cross the road.

There must be sufficient segregation of cyclists and pedestrians. This must be tactile and not simply visual.

The path ways to the crossings must be clearly marked and uncluttered.

The tactile signifying the crossing must reach the shore line.

The consultation feels rushed and incomplete. This must be widened to include more local residents, businesses and stakeholders including the Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind who's offices are very close to the proposed scheme. The NNAB have raised some serious and legitimate concerns.

Conclusion

The proposed scheme offers a slower, more dangerous and less segregated way of crossing St Crispin's than the underpass.

The central reservation is likely to be dangerous and difficult for blind and partially sighted people to use at busy times of day.

The design is incomplete due to the early stages of the Anglia Square development and this means that the current crossing on Botolph Street is dangerous for blind and partially sighted people as it stands. Consultation must be ongoing.



Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Director: Mr. M. Talbot
Registered Charity No. 207060

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16 January 2017

St Crispins Road, Toucan Crossing

The Norfolk & Norwich Association for the Blind (NNAB) have received plans regarding St Crispins Road, Toucan Crossing and submit the below report in response. **Please note two conflicting closing dates (13 January and 17 January) were given by the Council in different missives. We expect our response to be accepted and honoured within the remits of the later deadline.**

Key to Abbreviations used in the report:

VIP(s) = Visually Impaired Person(s)

NNAB = The Norfolk & Norwich Association for the Blind

Summary

The NNAB have responded to a number of road schemes over the last two years, and would normally be in support of the installation of a signal controlled pedestrian crossing but on this occasion we cannot support this scheme. Even with shortcomings of the present situation the proposed designs are in no way an improvement on what is already in place. This change would have a negative impact not only for visually impaired users but all pedestrians, cyclists and drivers using this part of the city.

Our main concerns and issues are:

- A safe, direct and easy navigable journey through an underpass will now be replaced by lengthy, more complex and undesirable 3 legged crossing.
- The survey proves that the volume of users can only but have a negative impact on traffic congestion and increase pollution with the number of times the lights will be activated.
- The new 3 legged crossing will not attract any of the current cyclists who use the roundabout so claims of cyclists usage increase are questionable.
- It is unclear how the segregated cycling and walking pathways will be achieved as claimed in the letter sent to local residents. Segregation is not indicated on any of the drawings.
- We consider that the consultation has been woefully inadequate. Too few of the people who will be affected have been consulted, the plans are too vague and the process has been undertaken with unseemly haste with last minute timing changes to include the Christmas period.

Also at:

3 North Lynn Business Village, Bergen Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk. PE30 2JG T: 01553 660 808
14/15 Willmet House, Victoria Arcade, Row 70, Regent Street, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. NR10 1RR T: 01493 745 973



Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

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The Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind

Please support the local Charity for Blind and Partially Sighted People in Norfolk

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- Able bodied pedestrians are likely not to wait for the lights, when traffic is stationary and gridlocked, and weave dangerously across St Crispin's Road. Where pedestrian waits are lengthy at other crossings in the city this already happens.
- The plans are linked to the redevelopment of Anglia Square, which could take years to come into fruition, or may not happen at all. Why cannot the underpass remain open until then and re-designs will be joined up to the redevelopment?
- The high costs of the crossing installation mean that there may be a better alternative which has not been considered or presented to the Public or NHAC.

The Negative Impact of the 3 Legged Crossing

We feel the removal of the underpass and the installation of the 3 legged crossing is a retrograde step. In the letter sent to residents it is stated that these works will 'facilitate easy pedestrian and cycle movements'. In terms of the visually impaired, this is definitely not so.

The underpass currently offers a direct, simple and safe route for VIPs to navigate. They can use the walls and the rails as navigation points and there is no added pressure of making it across the road in time. This will be replaced by an extremely challenging 3 legged crossing to do the same journey. Finding the crossing points could be difficult in the first place (current designs show tactile paving does not extend to the shorelines) and standing on refuges waiting for lights can be intimidating for those with sight loss whilst traffic races by on all sides.

The project takes pedestrians and cyclists from an entirely safe crossing into direct conflict with traffic with all that implies. These concerns also apply to all people who need extra time to get across the road safely including those who have any physical or learning disability.

Impact On Traffic Congestion vs. Survey Figures Analysis

The video survey statistics clearly indicate a very high percentage of pedestrians use this area, and these proposals will not constitute a better, safer journey for them or for cyclists.

We are astounded by a claim stated in the reported presented to NHAC (24.11.16) that 'testing of the current proposals suggests the addition of a crossing point would be unlikely to incur extra delay in terms of journey time along the inner ring road'. We would argue that the figures in fact disprove this claim and it is disingenuous to make that statement.

We question the analysis of the survey figures presented to NHAC and would request further explanation of the calculations. When we analyse the total count figures it shows 1891 pedestrians and 170 cyclists, a grand total 2061 over an 11 hour period. This would create an average flow of 187 per hour broken down into 171 pedestrians and 15 cyclists.

Also at:

3 North Lynn Business Village, Bergen Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk. PE30 2JG T: 01553 660 808
14/15 Willmet House, Victoria Arcade, Row 70, Regent Street, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. NR10 1RR T: 01493 745 973



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However, the NHAC document has been presented with a peak hour flow of 144 pedestrians and 22 cyclists.

Even basing it on the NHAC conclusions 2.4 people would be crossing the road per minute. Obviously in the real world there are peaks and lulls in usage but one can safely assume that during a working week between 7:30 and 9:30 and 4:30 and 6:30 usage will be highly concentrated. Currently pedestrians can use the underpass safely and without impact on traffic congestion but these figures prove that the impact could be approaching 300 people stopping the traffic during morning and afternoon rush hour (2.4 people x 120 mins = 288).

If the proposed crossing phasing is biased on the side of the traffic then people will be waiting unacceptable times at the road side and (if the present usage figures continue) then after a 5 minute wait there could be up to 12 people waiting (with bikes, pushchairs or mobility aids). Will the central island be large enough to accommodate this number of people? A crowded situation would be impossible for anybody with a visual impairment.

If the proposed crossing phasing is biased in favour of the pedestrians then the constant stopping of the traffic, combined with the lights on the roundabout, will obviously have a knock-on effect on the congestion on the roundabout and radiating roads, which are already a bottleneck. This will obviously adversely affect traffic flows and increase pollution.

We consider that the end result of this proposal will be that a large proportion of the pedestrians, from all walks of life, who presently use this route, including the visually impaired accessing the NNAB, will be forced to use other less direct, convenient or safe routes to and from the city. We consider that the changes will result in a huge reduction of amenity for vulnerable groups and there will also be deleterious effects for ordinary pedestrians and drivers.

Right of Way Extinguishment

We understand that the legal right of way of the underpass was extinguished in 2009. Our knowledge on extinguishing of highway rights is extremely limited, but we would request a fuller explanation as to how this was achieved? If we understand correctly this could not have been carried out unless the land was proved to be unnecessary for public users of the highway. How was this decided given that, at the time, there was no other alternative in place or that the Anglia Square redevelopment proposals at the time were not 100% definitely going ahead? Was a full public consultation conducted in 2009 specifically on the extinguishment of the highway rights of this underpass?

Questionable Assumptions of Cyclists Levels

The NHAC document claims 'there is an expectation that levels of cycling will rise significantly if facilities are improved'. Just by stating this will not make it correct in reality.

Also at:

3 North Lynn Business Village, Bergen Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk. PE30 2JG T: 01553 660 808
14/15 Willmet House, Victoria Arcade, Row 70, Regent Street, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. NR10 1RR T: 01493 745 973



Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Director: Mr. M. Talbot
Registered Charity No. 207060

The Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind

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There are a good number of cyclists using the perfectly safe, flexible and existing underpass who will find that they have exchanged a slight slope for increased waiting times on two separate refuges with a possible crowd of people and a conflict with cars all to gain a level surface crossing.

Furthermore, a competent cyclist who currently chooses to use the roundabout will not take an unnecessary 63 metre detour with a lengthy wait at a 3 legged crossing if they already do not use an entirely safe underpass. These cyclists will not travel to cross even less conveniently.

Anti Social Evidence

It is stated that 'the subway attracts anti-social and criminal behaviour'. What evidence can be presented to support this? And, if there is, what are the relative dangers compared to the increased danger of the complex interaction with moving traffic inherent in the projected change? Are there figures or a risk assessment considering the comparative dangers?

Cost

The figures reveal that the whole of the scheme will cost £900,000. The track record for other schemes has shown an over spend, so it seems sensible to assume it could be over £1million by the time everything is completed. Given this cost it seems that a scheme should show at least some benefit for a group other than an undefined number of cyclists rather than an out-and-out loss for all groups.

Anglia Square Development

We are aware that this scheme also comes in anticipation of the planned works on Anglia Square. In the past we know there have been other ideas for regeneration but these have not taken place. If the redevelopment of Anglia Square were to go ahead, this would be likely to go on for many years. Given the undefined nature of the projected redevelopment, and the possibility that any crossing may be unusable during phases of construction and even possibly completely superfluous, why cannot the underpass be kept in working operation until the redevelopment is complete? Then the future changes can be taken into account and the whole idea approached in a more considered and joined up way.

Segregation Details

The resident's letter states that full segregation in terms of walking and cycling paths will be installed on St Crispins Road. Could you clarify this? Past experience show that a white line is used as 'full segregation' and this is insufficient for the visually impaired.

Consultation Process

Finally, and very importantly, we consider that the consultation has taken place with unnecessary haste. The original NHAC documents gave a much longer lead in where it would have been possible to extend the consultation area to cover the wider population

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that uses this vital connection point into the city including pupils from a school, more residential homes in the north of the city, commuters who park at local car parks before walking into the city as well as a bigger cross section of people outside the cycling community who will be adversely affected by this change.

The NHAC documents stated a consultation period would originally commence in early February, considerations and feedback in March, then taken to committee for approval in April. Bringing the consultation forward to run over the Christmas period means that meaningful consideration has been unacceptably curtailed.

The resident's letter went out on 19 December, then the statutory notice was sent out on 23 December. The resident's letter was only sent to householders and businesses within a very limited area when it is known that this crossing is vital to a much wider population and that the changes will affect all highway users equally. Both forms of communication also have two different closing dates for responses; 13th January and 17th January. It is confusing that two dates have been given and we would expect the Council to honour all responses up to and including the later date.

The amended timings mean most business premises are too busy between Christmas and New Year, or closed completely, so the first opportunity to respond would be w/c 2nd January, giving only 9 working days or 11 working days to produce a considered response (dependent on each different closing date).

We are concerned that internal pressures have meant that there has been an unseemly haste to the process which has resulted in a failure to obtain a meaningful consultation result.

Conclusion

We feel this whole scheme will be of no improvement for the visually impaired. Further, that the same considerations of safety and sensible provision of amenity that affect the visually impaired will apply to the general population and that they too will have their amenity reduced and their safety threatened in pursuit of a flawed idea. That the reduction in amenity will detrimentally affect a huge range of people, the visually impaired, the less mobile, school children, drivers, everyday cyclists, pedestrians and, because of the costs involved, the wider tax paying public.

This is another example of a scheme that is being doggedly pursued by planners where the costs and value of the scheme are hugely disproportionate to the outcome and seemingly negligible benefit to so few.

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