



## MINUTES

### NORWICH HIGHWAYS AGENCY COMMITTEE

10am to 11.55am

24 January 2013

Present:	<b>County Councillors:</b>	<b>City Councillors:</b>
	Adams (chair) (V)	Bremner (vice-chair)
	Plant)(V)	Harris (V)
	Bearman	Carlo
	Scutter	Grahame
	Shaw	Stonard

\*(V) voting member

#### 1. PETITION

The chair agreed that the petition regarding Chapel Field North that had been received could be taken under the agenda item 5, below, Transport for Norwich, St Stephens Street and Chapel Field North.

#### 2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The chair said that five public questions had been received regarding Chapel Field North and agreed that these could be taken under the agenda item 5, below, Transport for Norwich, St Stephens Street and Chapel Field North.

The chair referred to a question received from Mrs Lynda Edwards relating to snow clearance and said that in her absence, he would ask officers to provide a written response.

#### 3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Harris declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5, below, Transport for Norwich, St Stephens Street and Chapel Field North because she worked in St Stephens Street.

Councillor Carlo declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5, Transport for Norwich, St Stephens Street and Chapel Field North as a member of the Norwich and Norfolk Transport Action Group.

#### 4. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2012.

#### 5. TRANSPORT FOR NORWICH : ST STEPHENS STREET AND CHAPEL FIELD NORTH

(Councillors Harris and Carlo had declared non-pecuniary interests in this item.)

The chair introduced the item and asked members of the public to present the petition and ask their questions. The chair said that in the absence of Mr Frankie Abel, Bethel Street, he would ask officers to provide a written response to his question.

Mr Peter Jackson, Upper St Giles, addressed the committee and referred to the citywide support for the petition of over 1,500 signatures and the public support on Twitter and online to oppose the proposals for Chapel Field North. He pointed out that the consultation had been conducted legally but not within the “spirit of the law”. He then presented the following petition:

“Don’t ruin the gardens and Chapel Field North –

We the undersigned object to the plan to remove the pavement on Chapel Field North in order to create two-way traffic for heavy goods vehicles:

- We believe there are other ways to improve bus services that do not involve ruining Chapel Field North;
- Many city residents were completely unaware of the proposed changes and the four week consultation period was too short and driven by funding not genuine public interest;
- We strongly request a proper review and new consultation in line with the council's duty to properly engage and involve Norwich citizens in the planning process.”

The transportation and network manager (Norwich City Council) replied on behalf of the committee as follows:

“The evidence supplied both as part of the consultation and in the committee report does not support the claim that Chapel Field North and the gardens will be ruined by these proposals. Many see the changes to the gardens as an improvement, with improved lighting, wider paths and new entrances that tie in with the new crossing points on the surrounding road network. Chapel Field North will benefit from a 25% decrease in traffic and the reduction in the number of queues it experiences at the current time. It is believed that these benefits outweigh the increase in larger vehicles using the street.

Alternative options were considered whilst the original strategy for the city centre measures was formulated, but all involved significantly greater levels of

intervention, including the loss of listed buildings, or part of the city wall, which is a scheduled ancient monument. In addition, none of the other options considered had anything like the positive impact on the city centre as a whole, or such a positive impact on bus services.

The overall changes to the city centre road network were part of the extensive consultation on the Norwich Area Transport strategy (NATS) that the county council undertook in 2009, and to which there were over 11,000 responses and 73% support for the city centre measures. In May 2011 the proposals were subject detailed media coverage when this committee first considered the scheme, albeit that the consultation had to be deferred at the time. In November 2012 when the official consultation took place extensive efforts were made to make people aware of the proposals and these are detailed in paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 of the committee report.

The planning process has been completed and the city centre measures are an adopted part of the NATS strategy which in turn forms part of the Joint Core Strategy for the greater Norwich area which is also adopted. The scheme is being implemented under the Road Traffic Act 1984 and the consultation that has taken place is significantly above the statutory requirements under this Act."

Mr Jackson said in response that although the consultation in 2009 was strictly within the law it did not include the full detail of the proposals for Chapel Field North and that the current evidence did not support a plan made 4 years' ago. .

Ms Elizabeth-Anne Wheal, off Bethel Street, asked the following question:

"Assuming that the proposed changes go ahead, would the committee be prepared, in order to mitigate the effect of increased heavy traffic on residents in Chapel Field North, to consider delaying the rerouting of further bus routes down Chapel Field North until there has been opportunity to gauge the effect of the traffic flow changes on Chapelfield Road, and, if there is significantly less congestion on Chapel Field Road once the changes have been implemented, consider allowing the bus routes to remain split between Chapel Field Road and Chapel Field North as they are currently."

The transportation and network manager replied on behalf of the committee as follows:

"It is not possible for either the city council or county council to specify which buses use which streets, it will be the decision of individual bus operators to decide which buses use the new routes provided. We can only provide a route that is available for buses or other types of vehicles.

Should the ring road prove to be less congested once the proposals are implemented then some operators may choose to route some services along it, although the traffic modelling suggests that a significant reduction in congestion is unlikely."

In response to Ms Wheal's supplementary question, the travel development team manager (Norfolk County Council) confirmed that the scheme had been developed in partnership with bus operators and residents.

Dr David Harrison, Chapel Field North asked the following question:

"Using the council officers' own data it is calculated that if this plan is implemented diesel emissions in Chapel Field North, already noxious, will increase by more than 300%.

Are councillors aware that the International Agency for Cancer Research (IARC) has now classified diesel exhaust particulates as Group I carcinogens; that being the case are they content to put in place knowingly a scheme which exposes residents, their children, users of the Gardens and others to this obvious danger?"

The transportation and network manager replied on behalf of the committee as follows:

"It is unclear where the figure of 300% comes from. It is not one the council agrees with. The independent air quality report concludes that both existing and projected levels of air quality are well with all existing UK and EU limits and that for all pollutants that are measures the predicted changes in air quality are negligible across at all points across the scheme area."

In response to Dr Harrison's supplementary question in which he pointed out that buses and heavy good vehicles would increase the diesel emissions six fold, the transportation and networks manager confirmed that the source of information in the report was based on an independent air quality report.

Mr Peter Jackson, Upper St Giles, asked the following question:

"In Appendix 4 of the NHAC (Norwich Highways Agency committee) report presented to the committee on 29 September 2012 it was stated that during peak times the additional buses which would travel on Chapelfield North would carry 82% of their seating capacity.

In a survey carried out over three days at the end of November, and confirmed again this week, the number of outbound buses between 7am and 9am which carried more than six passengers on the top deck was 0 on every survey day. In addition the number of inbound buses where the number of passengers on the top deck exceeded 15 was less than nine on all but one of the days checked. On that day it was nine. In order to meet the claim of 82% capacity there would need to be at least 29 passengers on the upper deck, assuming that the lower deck was full but not one bus either inbound or outbound met this criterion. Although the report does claim that it is the additional buses which will carry the average 82%, it is difficult to see why the extra buses would carry a much greater number than those which exist at present. This means that the number of passengers gaining the claimed two minute benefit and used to calculate a gross saving is substantially less than claimed.

In the Standard Note SN1522 which refers to Buses: Grants & Subsidies produced by the House of Commons Library for MPs, the following sentence appears "A key consideration in the designation of a BBA will be the ambition of the local council to use its traffic management powers to help make buses more punctual. The NHAC report claims that the scheme will improve reliability, but there is no data regarding bus journey times nor figures showing the number of buses on-time, late, etc. and therefore, no conclusions can be drawn regarding reliability or indeed punctuality. In fact, the report makes no reference to the key consideration of punctuality.

In view of inaccuracy of the figures produced in evidence. The fact that there are arithmetic errors and unexplained calculations in Appendix 4; the calculation used to support the extrapolation of individual passenger time savings into a gross figure is based on the inaccurate data. And that there is no evidence nor references to support the key consideration of punctuality will the committee defer any approval of the scheme until evidence is supplied to enable an informed decision to be made?"

The transportation and network manager replied on behalf of the committee as follows:

"The evidence supporting the bus punctuality is included in the report that was presented to NHAC originally in May 2011 and that was reproduced in the September 2012 report. BusNet data collected by the county council demonstrates the considerable variability in bus journey times along the ring road, and this evidence will be made available. However anyone who travels along this section of the ring road will be well aware of the unpredictability of travel times

The aim of the scheme is to increase patronage and a level of 82% during peak hours is the expected level. Bus patronage tends to be tidal and therefore it is to be expected that outbound buses in the morning and inbound buses in the evening will see lower levels of patronage. The additional capacity is needed to cope with the predicted growth in and around the Norwich area."

Mr Jackson referred to the photographic evidence he had taken over the last two days which had shown very few passengers on the buses and asked that the committee gave serious consideration to bus use on this route. Councillor Plant said that consideration of whether buses were empty or not was irrelevant as the scheme proposed was to plan for future bus use.

Mr Richard Wilson, Chapel Field North, asked the following question:

"Are the traffic planners and indeed the bus companies who will be increasing their bus services threefold onto Chapel Field North aware that many of the houses at the western end of the street have private parking spaces and garages for multi occupation attached to their houses with their only entrance opening onto Chapel Field North?"

These include:-

- The old St. Mary Mancroft Building which has many spaces,
- Hales Court has about five spaces.
- Ninhams Court has several garages and private parking spaces.
- No 1 has spaces.
- No 7 has garaging and spaces for 4 vehicles

The frequent access of these vehicles entering and exiting from their entrances is surely going to present a hazardous danger to the constant flow of buses and HGVs using this narrow road in both directions.”

The transportation and network manager replied on behalf of the committee as follows:

“On almost every street in Norwich there are vehicle entrances to private parking spaces or areas, the situation in Chapel Field North is no different. The traffic flows and number of parking spaces are both relatively low compared with other bus routes and the likelihood for any conflict is considered to be extremely low.”

Mr Wilson by way of a supplementary question referred to the negligible improvements to saving journey times on buses and the impact that it would have on local residents when parking or accessing/leaving their properties. The transportation and network manager said that there would be less traffic on the Chapel Field North and more capacity for residents to access private parking spaces.

The transportation and network manager introduced the report and said that the comments from Living Streets in appendix 3 had been received from the local body and not the national organisation; there had been a further representation received from the Norfolk Bus Forum supporting the proposal; and that the city council had received a request for a neighbourhood plan for Chapel Field North / Little Bethel Street, which under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 would need to sit under the Joint Core Strategy and the proposed scheme was in accordance with these adopted plans.

Councillor Lubbock (Eaton Ward) addressed the committee and expressed concern at the proposed removal of the disabled parking bays in Surrey Street particularly as general traffic would still use the road to access the loading bay to drop people off for the schools and offices. The principal planner (transportation) referred to the report and said that as on street parking in the core of the city centre was allocated for disabled parking it was inevitable that it would be affected by changes to arrangements in the city centre. He pointed out that there was provision at other locations in the vicinity, including significant provision at Chapelfield shopping centre and in Theatre Street.

The chair invited speakers from stakeholders who had responded to the consultation to address the committee as follows the Norwich Cycling Campaign, First Bus, the Norfolk Bus Users Group, the City Centre Management Partnership and Norwich HEART (Heritage, Economic and Regeneration Trust) (The responses and officer response are summarised in appendix 3 to the report.) The design, conservation

and landscape manager (Norwich City Council) confirmed that the Norwich Cycling Campaign's comments had been taken on board and would be considered in the designs and ensure that cyclists did not need to turn right into oncoming traffic. The proposed link for cyclists and pedestrians from Upper St Giles and the crossing to Chapelfield Park on Cleveland Road, which had been part of the proposals under the Grapes Hill bus lane scheme, would not be required if the current proposals were approved.

Councillor Plant said that he had confidence in the proposed scheme based on the evidence in the report and that the consultation with the business community and residents had been extensive with over 1,100 responses. He considered that it was a good and honest scheme. However he was concerned that the public perception was that the concerns of local residents had not been taken into consideration and that concerns had been raised about the facts and figures contained in the report. Councillor Plant then moved and Councillor Bremner (vice chair) seconded that the committee deferred consideration of the proposed scheme until the next meeting in March to present the facts and figures contained in the report with further clarification and evidence and to review the issues raised by residents in relation to the evidence and the alternative plans and representations that had been received.

Discussion ensued in which members supported the proposal to defer consideration of this important scheme to ensure that there was public confidence in the decision. Members considered that it should be incumbent on the member of the public who had queried the factual statements in the report to provide reasons for his view so that this could be evaluated. Officers should also look at the scheme in conjunction with the consolidated freight scheme to see how this could contribute to a reduction of heavy goods vehicles in Chapel Field North. Concern was expressed that there had been some misinformation circulated by the public on the proposed scheme and that this should be corrected. One member expressed concern that under the residents alternative schemes there would be increased traffic on Chapel Field East, including heavy goods vehicles, adversely affecting those residents and that Chapelfield Gardens would be surrounded by busy roads. Members asked for comments of the police on the traffic scheme and safety; and public health on air quality to be included in the report.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to defer further consideration on the proposals for St Stephens Street and Chapel Field North to the next meeting of the committee (10am on Thursday 21 March 2013 at City Hall) to allow for a further report to review the disputed factual evidence and to fully evaluate the alternative proposals that have been submitted by residents.

## **6. OBJECTIONS RECEIVED FROM RECENTLY ADVERTISED BUS LAYOVER FACILITIES AND OTHER TROS IN CITY CENTRE**

The chair pointed out that due to a printing error some of the titles of the appendices appeared on the previous page of the printed agenda.

During discussion the senior planner (transport) confirmed that the proposed use of the bus layovers at Wherry Road had been discussed with the bus companies. The bus layovers would not be used during football matches at Carrow Road and for one

hour before and one hour after the match, to avoid conflict with additional traffic on football match days. Given the fact that the bus layovers would primarily be used during weekday daytimes, any risk of conflict with football crowds would be minimal.

**RESOLVED** to request the head of city development to carry out necessary statutory procedures to:

- (1) implement the following restrictions as advertised:
  - (a) coach parking 2 hour limited waiting as located on plans below:-
    - (i) Lower Clarence Road – Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-3
    - (ii) Rouen Road – Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-2
    - (iii) Wherry Road – Pan No. PL/TR/3356/127-1
  - (b) amend the existing coach parking in the locations below to maximum stay of 15 minutes and for use by demand responsive transport vehicles:-
    - (i) All Saints Green
    - (ii) Bank Plain – amended length of coach parking as detailed on Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-12
    - (iii) Ber Street
    - (iv) Castle Meadow
    - (v) Palace Street
    - (vi) Theatre Street
  - (c) demand responsive transport parking space on Castle Meadow as detailed on Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-15 with a maximum stay of 15 minutes;
  - (d) loading restrictions and loading bay on Surrey Street as detailed on Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-8b;
  - (e) changes to disabled parking, bus stop/ hackney carriage stand, loading bay, coach parking and pay and display parking on Bank Plain as detailed on Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-12;
  - (f) 24 hour taxi rank on the south section of Tombland as detailed on Plan No. PL/TR/3356/127-13a.
- (2) advertise amendments to the previously advertised restrictions as detailed below:



Surrey Street – a 10m loading bay outside the Surrey Tavern as detailed on Plan No. PI/TR/3356/127/8b.

CHAIR