



### NORWICH HIGHWAYS AGENCY COMMITTEE

10am to 11.50am

18 July 2013

Present:

**County Councillors:**

Adams (chair) (V)

Harrison (V)

Bremner

Hebborn

Shaw

**City Councillors:**

Stonard (vice chair) (V)

Harris (V)

Gayton

Grahame

Little (substitute for Councillor Carlo)

\*(V) voting member

Apologies:

City Councillor Carlo

## 1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The chair said that two questions had been received with regard to agenda items 6, permit parking review, and 7, options for end-of-life signalled crossings, which would be considered under the relevant item.

### Controlled parking zone W

Councillor Stephen Little, Ward and Divisional councillor for Town Close, asked the following question:

"The northern part of controlled parking zone W currently experiences a particularly high level of parking pressure due to a combination of high density housing and close proximity to Grove Road shops, the city centre and local businesses. Residents recently carried out a survey of those living in Rowington Road, Sigismund Road and Trafford Road (north of Eleanor Road) to see how they would view changing permit-only restrictions for the parking bays in that area of the zone to 24/7 hours of operation. Currently the restrictions end at 6.30pm (Monday to Saturday) and, of the 40 people who took part in the survey, 38 said it was either very difficult or more difficult to park during the evenings. For most of the bays, a majority of residents were in favour of such a change. Would the Highways Agency consider a formal consultation with residents with a view to changing these bays to 24/7 hours of operation?"

The principal planner (transportation), Norwich City Council, replied on behalf of the committee:

“There have numerous requests for alterations and extensions to the controlled parking zones (CPZs) across the city but consulting on and implementing changes is both costly and time consuming. At the current time, there is no budget allocation for changes to any of the CPZs, and with limited resources, this is unlikely to be a priority for the foreseeable future. In addition, previous experience has shown that 24 hour operation is extremely onerous on residents, and previously when we have implemented it in more suburban locations, residents have requested its removal soon afterwards.”

Councillor Little suggested that this zone should be given priority for a review given that it was a large zone with different issues at the city end; that the detailed survey had been conducted and should be followed up and that there would be further development in the area which could impact on the CPZ.

## **2. STATEMENT ROLLOUT OF 20MPH SPEED LIMIT ACROSS THE CITY**

(The chair agreed at his discretion to the request of City Councillor Lubbock (Eaton Ward) to address the committee.)

Councillor Lubbock made a statement on the city council's cross-party support for the implementation of a 20 mph speed limit in residential streets across the city and referred to the re-launch of 20's plenty campaign for Norwich, to make the city safer and healthier by implementing a default 20 mph speed limit, such as in York, Oxford, Portsmouth and recently Cambridge. She advised members to refer to the campaign's website; note the city council's position and that as there was support from the police and health service providers, the committee should consider a collaborative approach to ensure that Norwich was one of the cities where a 20 mph speed limit had been implemented.

In response Councillor Bremner, as a member of the city council's cabinet, stressed the cross-party support of all the three groups on the council; that it had been regrettable that members of the cabinet had not been invited to the re-launch of the campaign; and that the city council was willing to work in partnership with the police and health services to ensure that 20 mph speed limits were implemented.

Councillor Stonard, as the current city council's cabinet member for environment, development and transport, said that following the meeting the previous day with Councillor Lubbock and County Councillor Bearman, there was agreement that there was cross-party support for the principle of implementing 20 mph speed limit in residential areas but the reality was that it was difficult to fund because of the budget reduction over the last two years. Other sources of external funding were being pursued.

Councillor Shaw suggested that match funding should be pursued with the caveat that 30 mph limits should be retained on through roads. Councillor Harrison suggested that the principle of implementing 20 mph restrictions in residential zones was nebulous as the police were unable to enforce the speed restrictions and that there needed to be legislation from the Secretary of State to reinforce this.

### 3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Harris declared an other (non pecuniary) interest in item 7 (below), *Options for end of life signalled crossings* as her partner had an office in the vicinity.

Councillors Bremner, Gayton and Grahame declared that they had an interest in item 6 (below), *permit parking review*, in that they were either holders or users of parking permits.

### 4. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2013.

### 5. NORWICH PARK AND RIDE: TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER CONSULTATION RESPONSES

(The chair agreed to take the report as urgent business due to the timing of committee meetings; the conclusion of the consultation period on 16 July 2013 and the implementation for smart ticketing.)

During discussion the assistant director environment, transport and development (Norfolk County Council) answered member's questions. She referred to the county council's decision to cut the subsidy to park and ride from £2 million and that £1.5 million had been saved by closing on site facilities such as offices and toilets, and had avoided closing any of the park and ride sites. There had been an overwhelming response from customers that reducing the services offered at the sites was preferable to the option of closing sites, with 75% of customers surveyed indicating that they were satisfied with the park and ride service. She said that the under the pricing structure, park and ride use was still less costly than the market rates for bus passengers and long stay parking in the city centre. The introduction of peak and off peak prices was consistent with other modes of transport. There had been no price increase last year. There was still a need to reduce the subsidy of £425,000 and further changes to frequency of services or closing a site would be less attractive options.

The assistant director environment, transport and development explained that the discounted tickets for cyclist using the park and ride had been suspended because of persistent abuse. She said that there was a small nucleus of cyclists who had used the service and that they would be compensated with three months free use when the smart cards were introduced. There was a programme in place to provide training for the park and ride drivers on the implementation of smart cards and officers would be on site to help customers select appropriate tickets. She pointed out that a family travelling on a family group saver ticket off-peak today would pay more than if they travelled in September.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to agree:

- (1) that the Traffic Regulation Order The Norwich City Council (Airport Park and Ride Site)(Off-Street Parking Places) Order is sealed with an

amendment to clarify that the off peak charging period applies all day on Saturday;

- (2) to delegate to the head of city development in consultation, with the chair and vice-chair, to take such action as is required to permit future park and ride price variations to be actioned, in response to market conditions for the Airport Site.

## **6. PERMIT PARKING REVIEW**

(Councillors Bremner, Gayton and Grahame had declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.)

The chair agreed to take the following question from County Councillor Corlett, Norwich Town Close Division:

“Our Town Close survey about the parking permit review the proposal to limit all households to a maximum of two permits has revealed a major concern about the negative impact on residents of shared houses (houses in multiple occupation or HMOs) who are early starters/night workers. This issue mainly affects sharers who:

- (a) do shiftwork/nights and leave their houses late at night and return early in the morning;
- (b) have to start work very early in jobs outside of the city

These people cannot use public transport to get to and from work and so it's not reasonable to expect them to get rid of their cars.

The change to two permits will result in these people having to walk long distances to and from their vehicles parked in the nearest non controlled parking zone which could be at a great distance from their houses. Long late night/dark early morning walks like this are particularly problematic for female shift/night workers and their worry is compounded by part-night lighting in many streets.

Under the proposals, night workers/early starters in shared houses will be expected to battle with their housemates about who gets the two permits that are allocated to the house. In reality, we have been told that a significant number of night workers/early starters will be 'forced' into abusing visitor permits – if someone else in their house isn't already doing so.

A number of residents have suggested that the obvious solution would be some kind of appeal system where sharers who are early starters/night workers above could provide evidence of their need for a permit. This could simply be in the form of a letter from their employer and to prevent abuse it could be reviewed annually.

Please can officers acknowledge the above as an issue for early starters/night workers who are residents in shared houses and comment on the solution suggested above?”

The principal planner (transportation) (Norwich City Council) made the following response on behalf of the committee:

“In most of the permit parking areas, we issue more permits than there is space available, and with rising levels of car ownership, the pressure on these spaces is increasing. It is not possible to continue to issue permits in an unrestricted way and maintain the value of the permit parking areas for residents, and the fairest way to limit permit entitlement is to restrict permits on a per household basis, as we have done in the city centre for many years. The report that members are due to consider makes it clear that it is intended to implement the reduction in permit entitlement from April 2015, which should give all households with more than two cars adequate time to decide how they are going to allocate their new permit entitlement.

It is not appropriate to offer a special dispensation to individuals who might need to work unsocial hours. It is really up to the household to determine which of its residents receives a permit for their vehicle on the basis of need, and not the city council. Any household that has more than two cars will need to take the opportunity to make alternative private provision if they wish to keep additional vehicles, and they have plenty of time in which to do so. Once the new arrangements are in place, new residents will know what the arrangement and entitlement is, and will be able to make appropriate decisions accordingly, as they do now within the city centre. The issue of multiple permits for individual households has been one of the most significant causes of complaint within the permit areas over the years, and the recent consultation, including the response from the survey undertaken in Town Close, demonstrates that there is a high level of support for this initiative.

Abuse of the visitors permit scheme is widespread, and this is also causing issues across the permit parking areas, and this has been raised a number of times during the consultation. Consequently, this scheme is also being reviewed, and a report will be brought to the committee in due course.”

By way of a supplementary, Councillor Corlett said that she considered that the proposal would lead to an increase in abuse of visitor permits.

Discussion ensued in which a member referred to the concerns of residents in Ashby Street which had instigated the review and suggested that the committee reviewed the changes to the permit parking scheme after a year. He referred to business passes and suggested that there needed to be clear criteria to distinguish operational business use and commuter use. A member said that whilst he was sympathetic to the needs of residents in HMOs there was pressure on parking spaces and therefore he supported the restriction of parking permits to two per household so that spaces were allocated fairly. However he did not support the proposal to implement a £10 charge on a household's second parking permit and pointed out that it would be difficult to administer and would not deter people from having a second car. Discussion ensued in which a member suggested that the £10 charge was a small measure and that it contributed to the council's aims to reduce car use and pressure on parking spaces. A member expressed concern that restricting the number of permits to HMOs would lead to safety issues particularly as street lights were turned off in certain areas of the city after midnight.

The principal planner (transportation) responded to the issues raised in the discussion. He pointed out that the terms and conditions for the use of business parking permits were provided when a permit was issued and that businesses had to demonstrate how the vehicle would be used for business purposes. He explained that other authorities had introduced an increased charge for second cars and that it contributed to the funding the maintenance of controlled parking zones (CPZs). He explained that the rationale for limiting parking permits to two per household was that many HMOs in the city were located in the terraced streets where the availability of parking spaces was only around 0.7 to 0.8 spaces per house and that it would be difficult for customer contact staff to administer for additional permits to dwellings in HMOs.

The vice chair moved and Councillor Harris seconded that the recommendation to introduce a £10 price differential to make the second residents' permit in a household more expensive from the first be deleted from the recommendations. With 3 voting members voting in favour (Councillors Stonard, Harris and Harrison) and the chair abstaining the amendment was carried.

Councillor Bremner called on the committee to thank the principal planner (transportation) and his colleagues for their work on the review.

The chair then moved the recommendations as amended.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously to:

- (1) ask the head of city development services to complete the statutory processes to implement the changes to the Traffic Regulation Orders that have been advertised;
- (2) agree that from November 2013, only those on limited incomes as determined by the receipt of appropriate 'gateway' benefits' will receive free parking permits, and that only Visitor permits will be issued free of charge;
- (3) agree the implementation of the revised permit parking scheme:
  - (a) replacing the existing non-residential permits with the following four new permit types:

Type 1	a zone specific short stay business permit (maximum stay 2 hours)
Type 2	a multi zone short stay business permit (maximum stay 2 hours)
Type 3	a zone specific, vehicle specific long stay business permit
Type 4	a zone specific property renovation permit (outer zones only)
  - (b) limiting households to no more than two residents' permits after 1 April 2015;

- (c) charging disabled (blue badge) holders at the 'short' rate, irrespective of the length their vehicle;
- (d) Introducing a no refund policy;
- (4) agree the terms and conditions for all permit types as detailed in appendix 3, of the report, to be implemented as the new permit types are rolled out
- (5) note that a report on proposed changes to the visitor permit scheme will come before the committee at a future meeting.

## **7. OPTIONS FOR END-OF-LIFE SIGNALLED CROSSINGS**

(Councillor Harris had declared a non pecuniary, other interest in this item.)

The chair agreed to take the following question from County Councillor Corlett, Norwich Town Close Division:

"The current signalled crossing in Unthank Road near Essex Street is used by many elderly people and their carers that come from accommodation for elderly people in Cedars and Somerley very close by.

The replacement of a signalled crossing with a zebra would mean that auditory cues about when it is safe to cross the road would be removed. Locally, elderly people say that they feel safer using the signalled rather than the zebra crossings on the rest of the Unthank Road.

- (1) Please can officers provide evidence which shows that the replacement of signalled crossings with zebras will not have a negative impact on elderly people and/or people with sight difficulties in (a) the area local to this proposed change and (b) more widely in the city?

and,

- (2) "Previous proposals to replace a signalled crossing in Unthank Road with a zebra resulted in a petition against the proposal signed by over a thousand local residents and many resident complaints that they weren't consulted in sufficient numbers.

For the current proposal, what form would the "public consultation on the proposal" take? How many local residents would be consulted? When would this consultation take place and over what period?"

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

"As the report states the future of each individual crossing will be based on an assessment of need, and the needs of the elderly and disabled population will form a crucial part of that assessment.

At the Unthank Road crossing a 12 hour pedestrian count was carried out earlier in the year. During the 12 hours 962 people used the crossing. Of those only 34 appeared to the observer to be over 65 (3.5%); the survey did not distinguish agile over 65s from the more frail ones. There were three wheelchair users and two with other disabilities, which may or may not be sight problems, that wasn't recorded. With such a low number of vulnerable users the possibility of removing the signals had to be looked at as a serious option

Zebra crossings are far more receptive to pedestrian demand than a signalled crossing, and a zebra crossing will allow the pedestrian guard railing to be removed freeing up more space for pedestrians in a very constrained area. This location is an ideal fit for a zebra crossing when checked against the Department for Transport criteria that is discussed in the report.

There will always be a small number of people who are fearful of change. However if I were to highlight the example in the committee report of St Andrews Hill where a zebra crossing replaced a signalled crossing five years ago we have seen accidents drop from eight in five years to one in the same time. I doubt that you would find many pedestrians there asking for the crossing to be changed back to signals.

In terms of the consultation that is to be carried out, it will include our standard list of consultees, such as frontages and local members as well as a range of interest groups such as the blind association, the Access group, the cycling campaign and bus companies. In addition we are proposing to erect a site notice on the existing crossing to highlight the proposed change, advising that details are available on our website or by phone and inviting people to comment. The results of that consultation will be brought back to this committee for consideration. The consultation will take place over a three week period and the timing is dependant on the cycle ambition grant announcement, but I would hope that it could happen soon after the schools go back in September."

At the commencement of the discussion, The vice chair suggested that the principle of replacing signalled crossings with an alternative facility such as zebra crossings or pedestrian refuges where pedestrian numbers and traffic levels were suitable should be considered separately to the second recommendation. Councillor Harris seconded this proposal.

During discussion a member referred to the reference in the report to the replacement of a signalled crossing in St Andrews Street by a zebra crossing and said that Unthank Road differed in comparison. Unthank Road was a vibrant and busy, narrow road, with a frequent bus service, which cars overtook. St Andrews Street was not primarily residential. Members considered that there was strong local support to retain the signalled crossing at Unthank Road by Essex. Members noted that it was difficult to cross the road further down and noted that cars parked in the vicinity of Park Lane obscured the crossing. Members considered that the choice of whether a crossing was signalled or a zebra crossing should be based on safety. The transportation and network manager said that in terms of safety there was not much difference between the safety rates of signalled crossings and zebra



crossings. The implementation of 20 mph speed limits would further slow down traffic and make it easier for pedestrians to cross roads. Members were advised that it would be difficult to make a decision on the Unthank Road / Essex Street crossing before the outcome of the cycle ambition grant had been announced. A signalled crossing slowed traffic and allowed cyclist mobility through the junction.

The chair proposed that the committee deferred consideration of the officer recommendation to ask the head of city development services to carry out a public consultation on the proposal to replace the existing signalled crossing on Unthank Road with a zebra crossing until the outcome of the cycle ambition grant was available. Councillor Harrison seconded the amendment.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) unanimously, to agree the principle that when any signalled crossing is due for refurbishment consideration is given to replacing the signalled crossing with an alternative facility such as zebra crossing or pedestrian refuge where pedestrian numbers and traffic levels are suitable and subject to the approval of the committee;
- (2) on the chair's casting vote, with two members voting in favour (Councillors Adams and Harrison) and two members voting against (Councillors Stonard and Harris) to:
  - (a) defer consideration of the second officer recommendation, until the outcome of the cycle ambition grant is available, ie:

“to ask the head of city development services to carry out a public consultation on the proposal to replace the existing signalled crossing on Unthank Road with a zebra crossing and to carry out the necessary statutory procedures for amending the 20mph speed limit as shown on the plan attached as appendix 2.”
  - (b) ask the head of city development services and the director of environment transport and development to submit a revised report to a future meeting.

**8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORWICH CITY HIGHWAYS AGENCY 2012-2013**

The vice chair congratulated the officers on the standard and detail of the report.

During discussion the transportation and network manager referred members to paragraph 27 of the report and explained that improvements to traffic junctions and road layouts had reduced traffic casualties; and pointed out that campaigns would be used to target road users' behaviour.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Highways Agency Annual report for 2012-13.

## **9. REVIEW OF ST AUGUSTINE'S STREET GYRATORY SCHEME**

During discussion the principal planner (transportation), the project manager (Norfolk County Council) and the environmental protection manager, answered members' questions. Members considered that the scheme was on balance a success traffic flow had improved but that the scheme should still be monitored to ensure that air quality improved. A member suggested that the committee should not be complacent about the reduction of traffic speeds to 20 mph in St Augustine's Street and new Botolph Street. Members noted that there were issues with cyclists using the pavements in Magpie Road and St Augustine's Street and sought clarification of the cycle route through the scheme. Members also noted that Patteson Road and Buxton Road were being used as a run though and that there was no obvious solution to resolve this. It was noted that the request for a zebra crossing in St Augustine's Street would be considered by the committee at a future meeting.

### **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) note the update on the scheme with regards to air quality, streetscape/regeneration, traffic issues and accidents;
- (2) that the committee continues to monitor the scheme.

## **10. MAJOR ROAD WORKS – REGULAR MONITORING**

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

CHAIR