



Cabinet

17:30 to 18:35

16 January 2019

Present: Councillors Waters (chair), Harris (vice chair), Davis, Jones, Kendrick Maguire, Packer and Stonard.

Also present: Councillor Carlo

1. Public Questions/Petitions

Two public questions had been received:

Dr Andrew Boswell, of Climate Emergency Planning and Policy, Environmental Consultancy, asked the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:

“The Integrated Impact Assessment of ‘Energy and Climate Change’ for Item 6 on the Norwich Western Link has not been filled in by officers, suggesting that there is no idea of what the potential impacts of a Norwich Western Link will be on total carbon emissions. The comments made do suggest that officers have identified a need for an overall package including walking, cycling and public transport to be established before any realistic carbon assessment can be made.

The January 2018 advice to Government from the Committee on Climate Change advised that UK transport sector carbon emissions should be reduced by 44% between 2016 and 2030 (now out-of-date, i.e. 44% is potentially an underestimated percentage, because it is based on a national target of 80% reduction in emissions by 2050, and this is currently being reviewed after the IPCC 1.5 degrees report).

Will the cabinet commit Norwich City Council to not supporting any eventual overall transport package that does not achieve transport sector emission reductions greater than 44% by 2030 (or a figure compliant with any subsequent updated advice from CCC), and in the meantime to not supporting the Wensum Valley Link?”

Councillor Maguire, the cabinet member for safe city environment, replied:

“Thank for your question – and I must say “well spotted”. The box was not ticked due to simple human error. The response was compiled over a number of sessions and that particular box was ‘left till later’. This was, therefore, a straightforward omission. Having said that, lack of access to Norfolk County

Council's detailed modelling makes it very difficult to comment on what that impact might be. It was partly for this reason that only conditional support was given at cabinet in July 2018.

In July 2018 cabinet agreed that any support for the Western Link was subject to "the delivery of a programme of measures to secure significant transport improvements to encourage sustainable forms of transport as promoted by Transport for Norwich". Thus by making support conditional, the effective assessment of impact on the environment is that it would be neutral: it would lock the additional capacity provided by the link for use by other more sustainable means of transport. This might, of course, change as more information becomes available.

With regard to setting limits to carbon emissions from traffic (or other sources) around the Western Link, this is not something over which the city council has any control. This is unlike within the City itself where, through its partnership with Norfolk County Council through our membership of the Norwich Highways Advisory Committee (NHAC), we can have some say on traffic management."

By way of a supplementary question, Dr Boswell noted that there was a lack of access to Norfolk County Council decision making on transport matters and asked if cabinet would commit Norwich City Council to ensuring the transport policy within the Local Plan was in line with the latest environmental targets and advice on climate change.

In response Councillor Maguire, the cabinet member for safe city environment, said that the city council's environmental strategy would be published in May 2019 and matters would be addressed within that document.

The chair added that the Greater Norwich Local Plan was in the process of being developed and would be subject to consultation which individuals and groups could feed into to. There also existed an opportunity to ask questions at the Greater Norwich Growth Board meetings which covered a wider geography.

The second public question was from Mr Rupert Read:

"The County Council are budgeting to spend £2m in 2019-2020 for further design work on the so-called Norwich Western Link, a climate dangerous road plan that would moreover damage the unique Wensum valley, which is currently quiet and unpolluted, a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Can you confirm that the city council will not contribute any money for the Norwich Western Link, either for design now, or later for construction and/or loan servicing if the road were to go ahead?"

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth, replied:

"Norwich City Council is not contributing any direct funding to the £2M pot for the design fees for the Western Link. At this stage it would be premature for me to give any guarantee either way about the city council's involvement in future funding of the Western Link. This will be considered when the county

council starts work on putting together any funding package for the delivery of the link.”

In response to Mr Read’s supplementary question Councillor Stonard said that Norfolk County Council used its capital expenditure to build roads whilst services were funded out of revenue expenditure.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2018.

4. Response to the Norfolk County Council consultation on the Norwich Western Link route options

(The chair agreed to move this item up the agenda)

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth, presented the report. He noted that the rationale of a Western Link was to remove traffic from suburban streets to the outer ring road, to reduce rat running in villages and to support economic growth. He said that if traffic was removed from the city centre, it would lead to less congestion and enable greater use of sustainable forms of transport such as buses and cycling.

Councillor Stonard said the Western Link would provide environmental benefits in a wider sense and reminded cabinet that the city council’s support was subject to the delivery of a programme of measures to secure significant transport improvements to encourage sustainable forms of transport. The impact therefore would be largely neutral. To highlight this commitment recommendations to this report had been amended and circulated. The second recommendation changed to read:

To remind Norfolk County Council that the council’s support for the Western Link is subject to the delivery of a programme of measures to secure significant transport improvements to encourage sustainable forms of transport, as promoted by Transport for Norwich and more specifically:

- to increase walking, cycling and use of public transport;
- to improve air quality; and
- to encourage inclusive growth and economic development.

He noted that there were four possible route options that Norfolk County Council were considering. These routes did not go through the Norwich City Council area and were primarily a matter for South Norfolk and Broadland district councils to comment on. However, the city council did not support route A as it provided the least amount of benefit, with provision for only 10,000 vehicles a day; the other three routes all offering 30,000.

Councillor Stonard highlighted that the consultation on the Western Link was still open and that others with different views were still able to contribute their thoughts to Norfolk County Council.

Councillor Carlo asked how the city council's support of the Western Link was compatible with the need to reduce greenhouse cases emission by 2030.

The chair encouraged Councillor Carlo to contribute to Norfolk County Council's ongoing consultation and said that the city council's support of the scheme was dependant on the delivery of a number of specific conditions. He said that cabinet had reflected on concerns raised in relation to traffic and amended its recommendations for this item accordingly.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) advise Norfolk County Council that the city council fully supports the principal of the proposal to construct the Norwich Western Link and that while the city council does not support option A it has no preference between options B, C and D; and
- (2) remind Norfolk County Council that the council's support for the Western Link is subject to the delivery of a programme of measures to secure significant transport improvements to encourage sustainable forms of transport, as promoted by Transport for Norwich and more specifically:
 - to increase walking, cycling and use of public transport;
 - to improve air quality; and
 - to encourage inclusive growth and economic development.

(A member of the public instigated a two minute silence at this point)

5. Draft Equality Information Report

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion, presented the report. She said that the format of the report had changed to infographics to make it accessible to a wider audience. The report published information about those that lived and worked in the city and council employees. Figures on pay for council employees had been updated and the report changed to take note of this; (agenda page 37 of the report had been amended and circulated to the meeting).

She noted that Norwich was a young city, influenced by its student population and that there were a high proportion of economically inactive residents. The report held no data on the working age population in receipt of benefits due to the introduction of universal credit it was not possible to get these figures. She highlighted that the pay gap for men and women working in the city had increased.

Members commended the improved presentation of the report. Councillor Harris noted that more commentary on what had not been included in the report and why would be useful. The strategy manager said that the figures on hate crimes and incidents were a useful data set which illuminated underlying community tension.

RESOLVED to approve publication of the annual equality information report as amended.

6. Greater Norwich Joint Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan

Councillor Waters, leader of the council, presented the report. He said the Greater Norwich Joint Five Year Investment Plan was a strategic plan which provided information on priorities for investment. He highlighted that one of the emerging trends was the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) being received was less than had been forecast. He noted that forecasting CIL income was complex and one of the factors which had impacted on CIL income in the city was permitted development as it was excluded from paying CIL.

The report explained in detail how infrastructure delivery would continue with a reduced amount of CIL. It was proposed in the recommendations to use the cash reserve to support delivery and to forward plan a new cash reserve. He emphasised the work the Greater Norwich Growth Board had achieved and that the investment was vital to Norwich and Greater Norwich.

In response to member questions the city growth and development manager said that the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan was updated annually in June.

Councillor Carlo asked how many years the £2 million repayment on the loan from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) to deliver the Northern Distributor Road and Long Stratton Bypass was to be made. She asked if the loan from the PWLB was in addition to the £205 million used to fund the projects. The city growth and development manager advised she did not have the detail to hand but would respond outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the Greater Norwich Joint Five Year Investment Plan;
- (2) agree the proposed 2019/20 Annual Growth Programme; and
- (3) agree that the cash reserve should be reallocated into the Infrastructure Investment Fund to support the delivery of previously agreed annual growth programmes, and support the establishment of a new cash reserve to be forward planned in future versions of the Plan.

CHAIR