



NORWICH HIGHWAYS AGENCY COMMITTEE

10.00 a.m. – 10.55 a.m.

22 January 2009

Present:

County Councillors:

Adams (Chair) (V)

Gunson (V)

Scutter

City Councillors:

Morrey (Vice-Chair) (V)

Read (V)

Bremner

Lubbock

*(V) – Voting Member

Apologies:

County Councillor Shaw (on other Council business), County Councillor Ward and City Councillor George

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair introduced Anne Bonsor, the City Council's Assistant Director City Development, to the Committee.

2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Hobart Square – Request for Disabled Parking Bay

Councillor Lubbock asked the following question on behalf of Councillor Fairbairn, Ward Councillor for Lakenham Ward:-

'Would it be possible for a disabled person, a tenant of the council living in Hobart Square, to secure a disabled parking bay on a piece of highway (not housing land) which is currently used for permit parking?'

The Transportation Manager, Norwich City Council, said in response that the Council received around 30 similar requests for disabled parking bays within controlled parking zones and that if each of these were advertised to change the order there would be a substantial cost implication to the Council. It would not be possible to mark the bays without changing the order because unless the traffic regulation order described exactly what was on the ground the all restrictions in the street would be enforceable. There was likely to be more than one resident in Hobart Square requiring a disabled parking bay. Members were advised that Blue Badge holders were permitted to park within zones without a permit and were provided with a free visitor's permit.

RESOLVED to ask the Head of Transportation and Landscape, Norwich City Council, to investigate the feasibility of providing disabled parking bays within controlled parking zones and report back to a future meeting.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Scutter declared a personal interest in item 6 below, 'Norwich Area Transportation Strategy Implementation – Newmarket Road Bus Lane Extension' as he resided on that road.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2009.

5. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT FOR THE THREE PILOT 20MPH LIMITS IN NORWICH

Councillor Read welcomed the report but pointed out that a pilot scheme would not be the same as widespread introduction of 20mph across all residential areas of the city. To ensure success he suggested that enforcement was maximised by working with the Safer Neighbourhood Area Panels and that road marking, that fell short of full scale traffic calming, was implemented. Consistent drivers, who did not accelerate, would not use more fuel in 20mph areas. Councillor Lubbock concurred with Councillor Read and said that the implementation of 20mph would support sustainable transport strategies and decrease traffic accidents. She considered that evaluation after 6 months might not obtain a realistic outcome because it could take longer to implement a change in culture and people's behaviour. Councillor Bremner welcomed the introduction of the pilot schemes as a positive move for the city.

Councillor Gunson referred to Appendix 8 and said that the mean speeds shown for Borrowdale Drive in particular were 'not out of keeping' and that members were deluding themselves if they considered that the implementation of 20mph schemes would cause further reductions.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) agree to the introduction of a 20mph speed limit in the following areas:
 - (a) Borrowdale Drive area as shown on Plan No. PL/TR/3355/783/3
 - (b) Marl Pit Lane area as shown on Plan No. PL/TR/3355/783/2
 - (c) Vauxhall Street/Newmarket Street area as shown on Plan No. PL/TR/3355/783/1
- (2) ask the Head of Transportation and Landscape to carry out extensive evaluation of the three pilot areas and report back to the September 2009 meeting with the results of that evaluation.

6. NORWICH AREA TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION – NEWMARKET ROAD BUS LANE EXTENSION

(Councillor Scutter had declared a personal interest in this item.)

During discussion on the implementation of the extension to the Newmarket Road bus lane, the Growth Point Project Team Manager, Norfolk County Council, and the Head of Programme Management, Norfolk County Council, responded to members' questions on the extent of the proposed continuous bus lane. A detailed plan of the scheme was displayed at the meeting. Members welcomed the proposal for extending the existing bus lane and improvements to the junction at Unthank Road which would include a refuge for cyclists. Members were advised that widening the bus lane near the mast would reduce visibility from Unthank Road towards Bluebell Road. The proposal in Option 1 was the most cost effective solution in terms of safety and reduction in bus delays and journey times. Councillor Lubbock pointed out that these improvements were important for the future growth of the city.

Consideration was given to a bus gate in Option 2 and members noted that this option is not recommended.

Councillor Lubbock moved and Councillor Read seconded that the speed limit on Newmarket Road should be changed to 30 mph.

Discussion then ensued on the merits of changing the 40 mph speed limit on Newmarket Road. Councillor Lubbock circulated a plan to members of the Committee which showed the 57 driveways and turnings into 14 roads in the half mile stretch of Newmarket Road, within the 40 mph zone, and said that this demonstrated the need to reduce the speed limit, particularly as it was used by park and ride buses and heavy goods vehicles, and would improve safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. Reducing the speed to 30 mph would bring Newmarket Road into line with other arterial roads into the city such as the A147 and A140. Councillor Scutter pointed out that the speeds shown in the report did not reflect local people's perceptions as depending on the time of day vehicle speeds differed and particularly late at night vehicles could be travelling at 50-60 mph. Councillor Bremner said that local residents could not understand why this road did not have a 30 mph speed limit and this was supported by the Hon Charles Clarke MP. Councillor Read also supported the move to 30 mph and said that this was in line with aspirations for a upper limit of 20 mph in residential areas. Councillor Morrey endorsed the proposal to reduce the speed limit to 30 mph which he considered as most sensible.

Councillor Gunson said that he considered that a reduction in the speed limit would not be effective and would only reduce speeds by 3 mph. He considered that Newmarket Road was different from the other arterial roads into the city in that it was wider, straighter with better visibility and had no major employment generators feeding into it before the ring road. It was also not a good idea to limit car journeys into the city when retailers were struggling in the current economic climate and it would slow bus journeys down just whilst the extension of the bus lane was intended to speed bus journeys up.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) approve for consultation the proposal to extend the existing bus lane from the City boundary to Unthank Road (Option 1) as shown on the plan provided in Appendix A of the report;
- (2) agree to local community and stakeholder's consultation on the detailed proposals;
- (3) ask the Head of Transportation and Landscape and Head of Legal and Democratic Services to progress the necessary statutory procedures associated with advertising:
 - (a) the proposed change of use of the nearside inbound lane of Newmarket Road from the City boundary to Unthank Road for use by Buses, Taxis and Pedal Cycles, operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
 - (b) the proposed change of operational time of the existing bus lane on Newmarket Road from Unthank Road to St. Stephens Roundabout to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- (4) with 2 members voting in favour (Councillors Morrey and Read) and 2 members abstaining (Councillors Adams and Gunson) to:-
 - (a) change the speed limit on Newmarket Road to 30 mph;
 - (b) delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Transportation and the Head of Transportation and Landscape, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to determine the exact location of the change of speed limit;
 - (c) ask the Head of Transportation and Landscape and Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Norwich City Council) to progress the necessary statutory procedures associated with advertising the proposed change of speed limit on Newmarket Road;

(Councillors Morrey and Read left the meeting at this point.)

7. BUS STOP CLEARWAYS

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the Head of Transportation and Landscape, to:-

- (1) note that marked bus stops no longer require a traffic regulation order to make them legally enforceable;
- (2) agree that all existing marked bus stops are upgraded to include a clearway line and a no stopping except buses sign;
- (3) agree that in future bus stop cages, clearways and no stopping signs should be provided in locations where parking is likely to obstruct the bus stop.

(Councillor Morrey returned to the meeting at this point.)

8. ON STREET PAY AND DISPLAY BAYS AND PARKING PERMITS – LEVEL OF CHARGES

RESOLVED having considered the report of the Head of Transportation and Landscape, to:-

- (1) ask the Head of Transportation and Landscape to review the level of charges for on street pay and display bays and parking permits on an annual basis, reporting to this committee each January;
- (2) agree that at the current time there should be no increase in the level of charges for both on street pay and display bays and parking permits.

9. ON STREET PARKING ENFORCEMENT MONITORING REPORT

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the Head of Asset and City Management, Norwich City Council, to receive the available performance results and note that income and the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices are above budget.

10. HIGHWAY PERFORMANCE MONITORING OF THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY AGREEMENT

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the Head of Transportation and Landscape, to receive the available performance results and note that, generally, recent performance results for the 2008/2009 financial compare reasonably well against targets.

11. MAJOR ROADWORKS – REGULAR MONITORING

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the Head of Transportation and Landscape, to note the report.

CHAIR