

Norwich Highways Agency committee

10:00 to 11:15

21 July 2016

Present: **County Councillors:** **City Councillors:**
 Adams (chair) (V) Bremner (vice chair) (V)
 Morphew (V) Stonard (V)
 Agnew Carlo
 Sands (M) Lubbock
 Shaw Peek

*(V) voting member

1. Public questions/petitions

The chair said that five questions had been received about the proposals for Britannia Road. The principal planner (transport) (Norwich City Council) had advised the chair that it was necessary to update the report and therefore the chair said the agenda item would be moved forward. The update could affect the responses to the questions and it was proposed that these should be considered after the update had been received.

Two questions had been received about The Avenues.

Mr Jolyon Gough, The Avenues, asked the following question:

“In responding to the residents’ strategy regarding the request for zebra crossings, the report states that it would be 'highly unusual for a formal crossing to be provided on a U class road and therefore cannot be justified'.

The situation on the Avenues is unusual.

There are up to 1,400 children, parents and staff walking to and from three schools within 500 yards using the intersection outside Heigham Park, this raised crossing point creates concerns/indecision as school children attempt to cross.

Will the committee reconsider the officers’ recommendation, bearing in mind the number of children and schools involved?”

The vice chair, Councillor Bremner, and local member for University ward/division said that he was a regular user of The Avenues as a cyclist, pedestrian and vehicle driver, and made the following response on behalf of the committee:

“I believe that the officers have presented a very fair report and I cannot agree that 5 additional crossings are needed in the area. There are many busy main roads that are in desperate need of pedestrian crossing. As you are all aware public finances have been severely curtailed in recent years. Currently, neither the city or county council has discretionary funds available for zebra crossing schemes; we can only assist when an extant traffic light crossing is decommissioned or where a fully funded scheme necessitates such a facility. Notwithstanding these restrictions we continually appraise injury accident data provided by Norfolk Constabulary and, where justified, may commission a Local Safety Scheme. Currently this is not warranted in The Avenues area as that extant 20mph speed limit, with traffic calming measures, is effective.”

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Gough said that the residents' report was a layman's survey of the traffic in the area and hoped that the council would use it as a benchmark to conduct its own survey. The Avenues was unique because of the number of schools in close proximity. The chair said that the committee would consider these comments when discussing the report later on in the meeting.

Councillor Simeon Jackson, Mancroft ward councillor, asked the following question:

“I have recently been informed by a resident about a dangerous situation on The Avenues junction with the ring road. He told me:

‘I've seen two potentially fatal incidents in a short space of time at the crossing of The Avenues and the ring road. Both involved traffic (one time this was an articulated lorry) on the ring road going through red lights just after The Avenues lights had turned green (and cyclists had already begun to cross the road).

Neither of these appeared to be a case 'just trying to nip through the lights as they changed red' - there's quite a long gap between the two sets of lights, and neither appeared to be a case of wilful negligence. Hence, I can only assume that in both cases the drivers were fooled by the green lights at the pelican crossing which is only another 25 m down the road, outside Co-Op.

As I have seen this happen twice in a short time frame I can only assume that it happens regularly and it will certainly lead to a fatal accident at some point.

Since that junction was redone and a crossing point was added on the same side as the Co-Op crossing, there seems little need for the second crossing to exist, particularly if it is creating dangerous situations.’

Given this information, will the council look into the safety issues at this junction, and whether there might be a need to change the timing of the lights, reorient the lights of the crossing point by the Co-op or other measures to ensure that what at first might seem like a minor confusion does not end up leading to a major or fatal accident?”

The vice chair responded on behalf of the committee and said that he was pleased that this question had been raised at committee. He knew the junction well which was in his ward and used it as a pedestrian, cyclist and vehicle driver himself. He then provided the following response:

“The arrangement of the separate crossing operating alongside the junction has been in place for many, many years and over that time the accident record for the junction has been analysed on a regular basis. Sight through from the crossing signals heads to the junction signal heads has not been identified as an issue over the years

As part of the recent works at the junction the upgraded signal heads are now LED technology and appear brighter making them more obvious to drivers.”

Councillor Bremner then said that he had a similar experience with an articulated lorry at this junction and, although the junction arrangements had been reviewed, he would follow it up and seek further information about the outcome of that review and what actions that could be taken.

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 17 March 2016.

4. Britannia Road Consultation and Recommendations

(The chair had agreed to bring this item forward.)

The principal planner (transport), Norwich City Council, said that Café Britannia/ HM Prison Norwich had met with planning officers and a planning application was expected within the next couple of months. Café Britannia was now very successful and could not be considered as ancillary to the prison. The prison might be required to provide off street parking and an access point which had less impact on residents as part of the planning consent.

The principal planner (transport) said that in the light of this development members might want to consider deferring consideration of the report or consider the elements of the proposals, such as traffic calming, which would be unaffected by planning permission. In response to a member's question, the principal planner said that the money for the yellow lines and traffic calming was available now and would need to be spent within the current financial year.

During discussion members considered that there was a range of issues separate to the café use. Two members asked that the extension of yellow lines should be reviewed to ensure that the proposal was the best solution. It was also noted that Britannia Road was an important tourist destination for visitors to enjoy the view of the city. The committee noted that the Mousehold Heath Conservators had raised concerns about antisocial behaviour by young motorists speeding and congregating

on Britannia Road and the Heath. Members considered that some of the issues were subject to better enforcement and that the police should be consulted on the proposals. The committee considered that although these were issues that could be considered today it would be better for all the proposals for Britannia Road scheme to be considered together at a future meeting and as the café's planning permission was imminent this would not be too much of a delay.

RESOLVED, with 3 members voting in favour, (Councillors Bremner, Stonard and Morphew) and 1 member abstaining (Councillor Adams) to defer consideration of this item to a future meeting following the outcome of the Britannia Café/HM Prison Norwich's planning application.

(As the committee had deferred consideration of the report, the chair asked the Britannia Road residents if they still wanted to put their questions or reserve their right to ask a question to the committee when the revised scheme would be considered. All of the residents agreed to reserve their right to ask a question on the revised scheme. The residents would be notified when the report would be considered by the committee.)

5. The Avenues (East) – Response to Residents' Report

Discussion ensued in which the transportation and network manager (Norwich City Council) referred to the report and answered members' questions.

Members expressed sympathy for the residents but considered that the issues raised were not peculiar to The Avenues (East). It was suggested that the roll out of 20mph speed limit across the residential secondary streets of the city would address some of the issues. The committee noted that there was an opportunity to roll out 20mph speed limit across the city under the Push the Pedalways scheme, funded by the Cycle Ambition Grant.

The committee considered the contribution that the schools made to traffic congestion in the mornings and afternoons. Members suggested that the schools should encourage pupils to walk or cycle wherever possible. It was the responsibility of the schools to manage how students travelled to school and it was noted that some of the schools had wide catchment areas which required students to be transported by car or mini-bus.

In reply to a member's question, the transportation and network manager referred to the report and said that officers had been asked by the city council's scrutiny committee to report on verge parking across the city. The issues raised by the residents for The Avenues and Jessop Road would be considered as part of this review.

The vice chair referred to the constraints on the county council's budget and said that The Avenues was a very small part of the city. The transportation and network manager explained that there were lots of requests for pedestrian crossings and that she had received another request for a zebra crossing near the Roman Cathedral on Unthank Road that day. In order to justify a crossing on The Avenues, there would need to be a steady flow of pedestrians at all times, not just for a period in the morning and afternoon, for five days a week, for 36 weeks a year, during school terms.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

- (1) thank the residents for their report and to note the officer responses to the issues raised;
- (2) ask the head of city development services (Norwich City Council) to carry out the necessary statutory process to implement the new waiting restrictions shown on plan number PL/TR/3329/765.

6. Transport for Norwich (TfN) Hall Road (Bessemer Road to Old Hall Road)

The NATS manager (Norfolk County Council) introduced the report and answered members' questions.

On behalf of Councillor Whitaker, county councillor for Lakenham Division, a member asked why parking bays, which appeared to be a sensible proposal, were considered to be outside the scope of this scheme. The NATS manager explained that the funding of the scheme was for the provision of cycling through the Cycle Ambition Grant and developer S106 developer contributions were committed for sustainable transport solutions. The issue of verge parking would be considered as part of the city council's scrutiny committee's review.

In reply to a member's question the NATS manager explained that the path was a shared by cyclists and pedestrians and was not a segregated path for cyclists and pedestrians. The principal planner (transport) acknowledged that from a user point of view segregated facilities were better, but in this case the scheme was joining up to an existing shared facility and was not wide enough to provide a separate footway and cycleway.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

- (1) approve the changes required to implement the scheme, including:
 - (a) conversion of footway on the east side of Hall Road to shared use
 - (b) footway/cycletrack from the recently implemented shared use
 - (c) footway/cycletrack associated with the ASDA works to Old Hall Road.
 - (d) revoke the existing 40mph speed limit on Hall Road and replace with a 30mph speed limit.
 - (e) remove the pedestrian refuge 125 metres south of Robin Hood Road and replace it with a larger pedestrian refuge in the same location.
 - (f) remove the pedestrian refuge 50 metres north of Fountains Road and provide a new pedestrian refuge closer to Fountains Road.
- (2) ask the head of citywide development services (Norwich City Council) to carry out the necessary statutory procedures to confirm the following Traffic Regulation Orders and Notices:

- (a) the Traffic Management Order - Replace the existing 40mph speed limit on Hall Road with a 30mph speed limit from Barrett Road Roundabout southwards to Ipswich Road.
- (b) the Traffic Management Notice - Convert the existing footway between Old Hall Road to the existing facility outside Asda.

7. Transport for Norwich (TfN) – Project 17 – Lakenham Way

The NATS manager (Norfolk County Council) introduced the report and answered members' questions.

The committee noted that the scheme provided an opportunity to implement a high quality facility for cyclists and pedestrians and remove conflict with other road users. The anticipated usage was based on surveys for pedestrians and cyclists as part of the Yellow Pedalway consultation and would meet growth as journeys increased to Asda and other stores.

Members sought clarification about the status of Lakenham Way, its ownership and responsibilities for maintenance. The head of citywide development services said that Railway Paths Limited (RPL) was a national charity which had to prioritise its funding for major infrastructure schemes.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

- (1) approve for consultation the proposals for the Lakenham Way project, including:
 - (a) widening of the existing path between Brazengate and the Hall Road Bridge from a nominal 3.0m to provide a 4.0m shared use pedestrian/cycle path;
 - (b) TRO for conversion of pedestrian path to allow shared use by cyclists and any other TROs required (please note that the requirement for TROs will depend on the legal status of the land – see item 14 for more information);
 - (c) removal and thinning of low value trees/scrub to facilitate the above;
 - (d) upgrade of existing street lighting to provide LED motion sensitive lanterns (Brazengate to Sandy Lane). Provision of additional lighting underneath Hall Road Bridge and Barrett Road Bridge;
 - (e) repair of steps leading to the route from Barrett Road and Hall Road and marking the cycle path alongside St John's Close more clearly;
 - (f) repairing the shared use path between Lakenham Way and Duckett Close, including the removal of two trees currently causing root damage;
 - (g) a biodiversity sub-project to include removal of scrub/low value trees, selective pollarding/tree thinning, provision of bird and bat boxes and hibernacula for hibernating reptiles and the installation of signs showing artwork designed by local school children about the history and wildlife of Lakenham Way.
- (2) asks the head of citywide development (Norwich City Council) to carry out the necessary statutory procedures associated with advertising any

Traffic Regulation Orders and Notices that may be required for the implementation of the scheme as described in the committee report and carried out after the resolution of issues outlined in the paragraph “scheme timescales”;

- (3) agree that the outcome of the proposed consultation will be reported to a future meeting of the committee.

8. Annual report of the Norwich City Highways Agency 2015-2016

RESOLVED, unanimously, having considered the joint report of the head of city development services (Norwich City Council) and executive director of community and environmental services (Norfolk County Council), to approve the Norwich Highways Agency report for 2015-2016.

9. Transport for Norwich (TfN) and Northern Distributer Road (NDR) update report

Discussion ensued in which the major projects manager (Norfolk County Council) undertook to take questions from Councillor Carlo and provide her with responses on the funding of the Northern Distributer Road from the district councils and other matters outside the meeting.

Members referred to Park and Ride and commented that the hours of operation were too restrictive. Members considered that the hours of operation should be extended into the evening to allow people to eat out or go late night shopping and at holiday periods, to encourage tourism. These comments would be reported back to the Park and Ride operator by the officers.

The chair said that the report had been considered at the county council’s environment development and transport committee on 8 July 2016 and confirmed that members of the public and other councillors could ask questions at meetings of this committee. Other members considered that there was an opportunity for members to refer issues to the city council’s scrutiny committee.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to note the report.

10. Major road works – regular monitoring

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the head of city development services (Norwich City Council), to note the report.

CHAIR