

**Report to** Norwich highways agency committee

**Item**

12 June 2014

**Report of** Head of city development services

**6**

**Subject** Push the Pedalways – Tombland & Palace Street

### **Purpose**

To seek approval to consult on proposals for the enhancement of facilities for cycling and walking in Tombland and Palace Street as part of the Push the Pedalways programme.

### **Recommendations**

That the committee:

- (1) approves in principle the proposals for the enhancement of facilities for cycling and walking in Tombland and Palace Street which include
  - (a) Replacing the roundabout in front of the Maids Head Hotel with a priority junction
  - (b) Removing the central island on Tombland in front of the Erpingham Gate
  - (c) Removing the signalled crossing on Tombland by the Edith Cavell Statue and replacing it with a toucan crossing by the Princes Street junction
  - (d) Providing a two-way cycle track on the eastern side of Tombland and the southern side of Palace Street from just south of the new toucan crossing at the junction of Princes Street and Tombland to the junction of Palace Street with St Martin at Palace Plain.
  - (e) Widening the footpaths in the northern part of Tombland
  - (f) Amending the waiting, loading and parking restrictions in the area
  - (g) Introduce contra flow cycling in the area known as the Tombland Triangle
  - (h) Removing unnecessary street clutter such as guard railing and signage
- (2) asks the head of city development services to progress statutory procedures associated with advertising legal orders and notices that are necessary for implementation of the scheme as shown on Drawings 301739CA-13-PE4082-PRE-004B and PRE-005A and which include
  - (a) Providing a two-way cycle track on the eastern side of Tombland and the southern side of Palace Street from the new toucan crossing at the junction of Princes Street and Tombland to the junction of Palace Street with St Martin at Palace Plain.

- (b) Introduce a no waiting no loading restriction on Tombland and Palace Street between Princes Street and St Martin at Palace Plain
- (c) Introduce a loading bay on Tombland outside the Samson and Hercules House
- (d) Amend the loading bay outside the Maids Head Hotel
- (e) Shorten the coach bay on Palace Street by St Martin at Palace Plain
- (f) Amend the position of the bus stops on the western side of Tombland.
- (g) Allow contra flow cycling on the one way sections of the Tombland Triangle

### **Financial consequences**

The preliminary budget estimate for the scheme is £800,000. This funding is from the Push the Pedalways budget. The design progress has revealed opportunities for creating a better quality cycle route and public realm than was appreciated when the Cycle City Ambition Grant application was written. The project will therefore require more funds than originally budgeted for this project. Savings will be made elsewhere in the programme.

### **Corporate objective / Service plan priority**

The scheme helps to meet the corporate priority 'A safe and clean city' and 'A city of character and culture' and the service plan priority to implement the Local Transport Plan.

**Wards:** Thorpe Hamlet

**Cabinet member:** Cllr Stonard – Environment, development and transport

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### **Background documents**

Traffic counts and traffic modelling data

Drawings 301739CA-13-PE4082-PRE-004B and PRE-005A –  
Will be made available on line and tabled at the meeting

## Background

1. Members will be aware that the city council has received £3.7M of cycle city ambition grant funding from the Department for Transport to fund the Push the Pedalways programme of cycling infrastructure improvements. These are concentrated on the pink pedalway between the hospital / research park to Salhouse Road, along with some important, strategic links to that route such as Magdalen Street. This funding is supplemented by £2M of local funding contributions.
2. The programme consists of 22 individual projects and this report is about project 13 - Tombland and Palace Street which is the link in the pink pedalway that runs between Princes Street and St Martin at Palace Plain. A location plan is attached as appendix 1
3. Tombland is one of the most strategically and historically important places in the city. It was the Anglo-Scandinavian market place; it attracts visitors who appreciate its fine array of listed buildings and access to the cathedral; and vehicular access to the residents, businesses and institutions in The Close is gained via Tombland. Most buses heading to the north of the city travel via Tombland towards Magdalen Street. It also provides access to city centre car parks and it is the direct route for many to the city's law courts. In the longer term the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy Implementation Plan (NATS IP) seeks to reduce the amount of through traffic in the area but for the time being existing traffic levels have to be catered for.
4. Fulfilling the main objective of the Push the Pedalways programme to provide high quality cycling facilities cannot be achieved at the expense of other considerations in the area.

## The issues

5. Pedalways - As well as being part of the pink pedalway, Tombland also forms part of two other pedalways. The green pedalway (Bowthorpe – Broadland Business Park) crosses Tombland between Princes Street and St Faiths Lane and the red pedalway (national cycle network route one) links Princes Street and Upper King Street. This makes the Tombland - Princes Street junction one of the most critical on the cycle network.
6. Cyclists – Surveys show that on an average day between 7am and 7pm the following number of cyclists used the area

Tombland north bound	374
Tombland south bound	352
Palace Street northeast bound	85
Palace Street southwest bound	129
Wensum Street north bound	306
Wensum Street south bound	240

7. This clearly demonstrates that currently the most popular route for cyclists is not the pink pedalway, but the north south route through Wensum Street and Tombland. However with the improvements planned for the eastern section of the pink pedalway through Mousehold Heath and Heartsease to areas of housing development in Broadland it is expected that the numbers using Palace Street will increase significantly.
8. Areas that are especially difficult for cyclists to negotiate are:
- The roundabout, where northbound cyclists are often prevented from positioning themselves on the right hand side of the approach lane for the turn into Palace Street by vehicles;
  - The right turns from Tombland into Princes Street and from Palace Street into St Martin at Palace Plain where cyclists have to wait in the middle of the carriageway between two streams of traffic before they can turn;
  - On Palace Street where the current width tempts motorists to dangerously overtake cyclists at the same time as vehicles are approaching in the opposing lane; and
  - The need to ride along Tombland rather than straight across when cycling between the Ethelbert Gate / St Faiths Lane and Princes Street or from Queen Street towards Ethelbert Gate / St Faiths Lane due to the one way system around the disused toilet.
9. Traffic – Surveys show that on an average day between 7am and 7pm the following numbers of vehicles are driven through the area

	Motor cycles	Cars, taxis & small vans	Goods vehicles	Buses & Coaches
Tombland North bound	87	4823	51	483
Tombland South bound	53	6027	95	503
Palace Street north east bound	33	2609	24	21
Palace Street south west bound	46	5317	77	48
Wensum Street north bound	98	7389	98	500
Wensum Street south bound	9	1106	18	455

10. Road Safety – The accident data for the area shows that there have been 14 recorded injury accidents in the area covered by this project in the 5 years ending 30 April 2014; 13 slight and 1 serious. 6 accidents involved cyclists and 4 involved pedestrians. At the roundabout there were 6 accidents in total, 5 of which involved cyclists. The other accident involving

a cyclist was on Palace Street where the cyclist was struck by an overtaking car.

11. Vehicle speeds – The speed limit is currently 30mph, but traffic should not be travelling at more than 20mph in a busy city centre location and Tombland and Palace Street will be covered by the 20mph limit that will be introduced across the whole city centre as part of another Push the Pedalways project. Some of the features within the scheme will act as additional traffic calming to ensure that this is achieved.
12. Aesthetics – There are several features of the northern part of Tombland that detract from the aesthetic quality and historic character of the space:
  - The signalled crossing on Tombland next to the Erpingham Gate and the Edith Cavell statue;
  - The guard railing and white zig zags associated with the crossing;
  - The roundabout and splitter islands on the approach to the roundabouts;
  - The dominance of asphalt carriageway.
13. Parking and loading – Currently no parking is allowed on the main carriageway in Tombland, although loading can take place outside of peak hours. Several properties on the western side do not have access to any off street loading facilities. Daytime pay and display bays and taxi ranks are provided in the area known locally as the Tombland triangle in front of the Ethelbert Gate. Evening and Sunday parking is available on Palace Street
14. Footpaths and pedestrian crossings – On the eastern side of Tombland the footpath in front of The Edith Cavell pub and the row of shops is just 1.5m wide in places which cannot adequately cater for the footfall along this street. The amount of space in front of the Erpingham Gate and Maids Head Hotel is also less than is required for people to linger and socialise in the space while others walk past them. There are no adequate crossing facilities at the junction with Palace Street or Wensum Street near the roundabout.
15. Erpingham Gate - The central island in Tombland prevents large delivery vehicles turning into the Erpingham Gate. These vehicles often then use the narrower Ethelbert Gate and cause damage to the scheduled ancient monument.

## **Design considerations**

16. Taking account of the issues detailed above the principles underpinning the redesign of Tombland and Palace Street are
  - Provide high quality cycling facilities for the pink pedalway route, reducing the potential for cycle / vehicle conflict, at the same time

ensuring that the needs of cyclists travelling in other directions are not compromised and improved where possible

- Improve the pedestrian environment by providing wider footways, retaining a signalled crossing facility and providing “courtesy crossings” near the Maids Head Hotel
- Reduce vehicle speeds
- Improve access to Erpingham Gate
- Enhance the public realm
- Ensure adequate loading facilities for are provided for local businesses

17. A multi-disciplinary team of officers including a traffic engineer, a road safety engineer, a cycling officer, transport planners, a landscape architect, the manager of the building conservation team and highway engineers have worked closely together to design the optimum solution for the area. Several options for different elements of the scheme have been considered and the proposed design is the one that the design team concluded best resolved the design issues listed above.

18. The proposed designs are shown on the plans attached as appendix 2, Tombland and appendix 3 Palace Street.

### **The proposals**

19. Tombland / Palace Street / Wensum Street junction – The existing roundabout, approach lanes and traffic island occupy a significant amount of space and the accident record shows that it is the source of conflict between cyclists and motorists. Therefore it is proposed to replace the roundabout with a priority junction, with Tombland / Wensum Street being the main route and Palace Street being the side road.

20. Currently overall vehicle flows indicate that Tombland / Palace Street is the more heavily trafficked route. However Tombland / Wensum Street is the main route for both buses and cycles and therefore in terms of promoting sustainable transport it makes sense to assign the priority to that route. The majority of traffic turning out of Palace Street will turn left into Tombland while the majority turning into Palace Street will be turning right from Tombland. The relatively low flows entering Tombland from Wensum Street means that these right turners are unlikely to have to wait very long, if at all, for a gap in the traffic to turn and therefore there is no need for a right turn filter lane.

21. The removal of the roundabout also means that the traffic island opposite the Erpingham Gate can be removed, making access through the gate for large vehicles possible and reducing or eliminating the damage currently being caused to the Ethelbert Gate by these vehicles.

22. Looking forward to a time when the traffic levels in the area have been reduced through the NATS IP, a roundabout at this junction would be

completely unnecessary so removing it now is compatible with the longer term aspirations for reducing traffic and improving public realm quality.

23. Cycling provision – The carriageway width in Tombland between Princes Street and Palace Street will be reduced from approximately 10m to 6m, which is sufficient for two buses to pass. Combining this with the removal of the roundabout will allow significant amounts of carriageway space to be reallocated for pedestrians and cyclists. It is proposed to provide a 3m wide two way cycle track on the eastern side of Tombland between Princes Street and Palace Street which avoids the need for cyclists to have any contact with vehicles when riding along Tombland or Palace Street. Protection for vehicles is the feature that people who lack confidence on a bike most value. The cycle track will be clearly distinguished from the pedestrian space through different surface materials and / or a level difference. The 2 way cycle track will then continue into Palace Street, running from the Tombland junction to the St Martin at Palace Plain junction along the southern side of the street. On Palace Street this will be achieved by narrowing the carriageway to 5m and the footpath to 1.5m. Due to the limited overall width of the highway along Palace Street the best width that can be provided for the cycle route ranges from 2.2m to 2.8m. The two way cycle track will terminate at the junction where cyclists on the pink pedalway will then join the carriageway to cycle along the lightly trafficked St Martin at Palace Plain / Bishopgate. A raised cycleway featuring permeable paving will be constructed behind a 1.8m wide footway.
24. The “Tombland triangle” currently operates under a one way system with vehicles entering the triangle from Tombland via the northern arm and exiting via the southern arm. To assist cyclists on the green pedalway it is proposed to allow contra-flow cycling on both arms.
25. Toucan Crossing – The existing signalled crossing opposite the Edith Cavell statue is well used, with the crossing being called around 700 times in a typical day. However, looking at the pattern of the pedestrians crossing here there is no obvious need for the crossing to be located in this exact spot; a location anywhere from Princes Street to Erpingham Gate would cater for the need.
26. It is therefore proposed to remove the existing signalled crossing and provide a toucan crossing immediately adjacent to the Princes Street junction. As well as serving the pedestrian crossing demand it would also allow cyclists to cross safely from Princes Street to the 2 way cycle track provided as part of the pink pedalway and to the “Tombland triangle” for cyclists on the green pedalway. It will also help southbound cyclists on the red pedalway. In addition, this location is where the proposed Edith Cavell Trail will cross Tombland.
27. Consideration was given to removing any form of signalled crossing and providing a zebra crossing instead. However the pedestrian crossing numbers are so high that it is very likely at peak times that a zebra

crossing would be so heavily used that it caused delays for motorists, and in particular buses. Signalled crossings are also valued by blind and partially sighted people.

28. Pedestrian improvements – The removal of the roundabout and central traffic island allows for the existing footpaths to be widened, in addition to cycle tracks being provided. On the eastern side a minimum width of 3m can be provided along the vast majority of the footpath save for a pinch point of 2.2.2m. On the western side the footpath forms part of extensive public spaces, but even at its narrowest, extends to 2.8m wide.
29. As well as a formal crossing it is proposed to introduce a number of informal crossing points on raised tables. One will be located on Tombland outside the Erpingham Gate, one on Wensum Street immediately north of the Palace Street junction, and three on Palace Street; one immediately north east of the Tombland junction, one southwest of the junction with Pigg Lane and one southwest of the junction with Bedding Lane. As well as assisting pedestrians these crossing points will have a speed reducing effect. Inbound traffic will have to give way to outbound traffic at the pinch points near Pigg Lane and Bedding Lane.
30. Speed reduction – As part of the Push the Pedalways project the intention is that all streets within the city centre will be subject to a 20mph restriction. The legal orders for this will be progressed as part of the project 19 in the pedalway programme. However, the design of the scheme proposed for Tombland and Palace Street, with narrower carriageways and speed tables, ensures that speeds in this area should be compliant with the 20mph restriction.
31. Public Realm Improvements – Fine quality buildings contain the public space in Tombland. Viewed on plan it is easy to see that Tombland is made up of a large rectangular space to the south and a smaller rectangular space to the north, which are connected by a narrower section of street. This is less apparent on the ground because of the dominance of highway features and carriageway space. Our project proposes significant changes to the northern part of Tombland. The new kerb lines have been aligned to emphasise the rectilinear nature of the space by running parallel to the building line rather than conflicting with them by curving through the space. This is made possible by the removal of the roundabout. The enhancement of the public realm quality will be further improved by the careful choice of materials and a reduction in unnecessary highway paraphernalia.
32. On Street Loading and parking – In order to cater for the loading needs of the businesses on the west side of Tombland it is proposed that a loading bay be provided outside the Samson and Hercules House. This will be designed to blend into the footpath when not in use, similar to the recently introduced bay on Bethel Street outside the old fire station. With the provision of a dedicated loading bay that can be used at all times (an

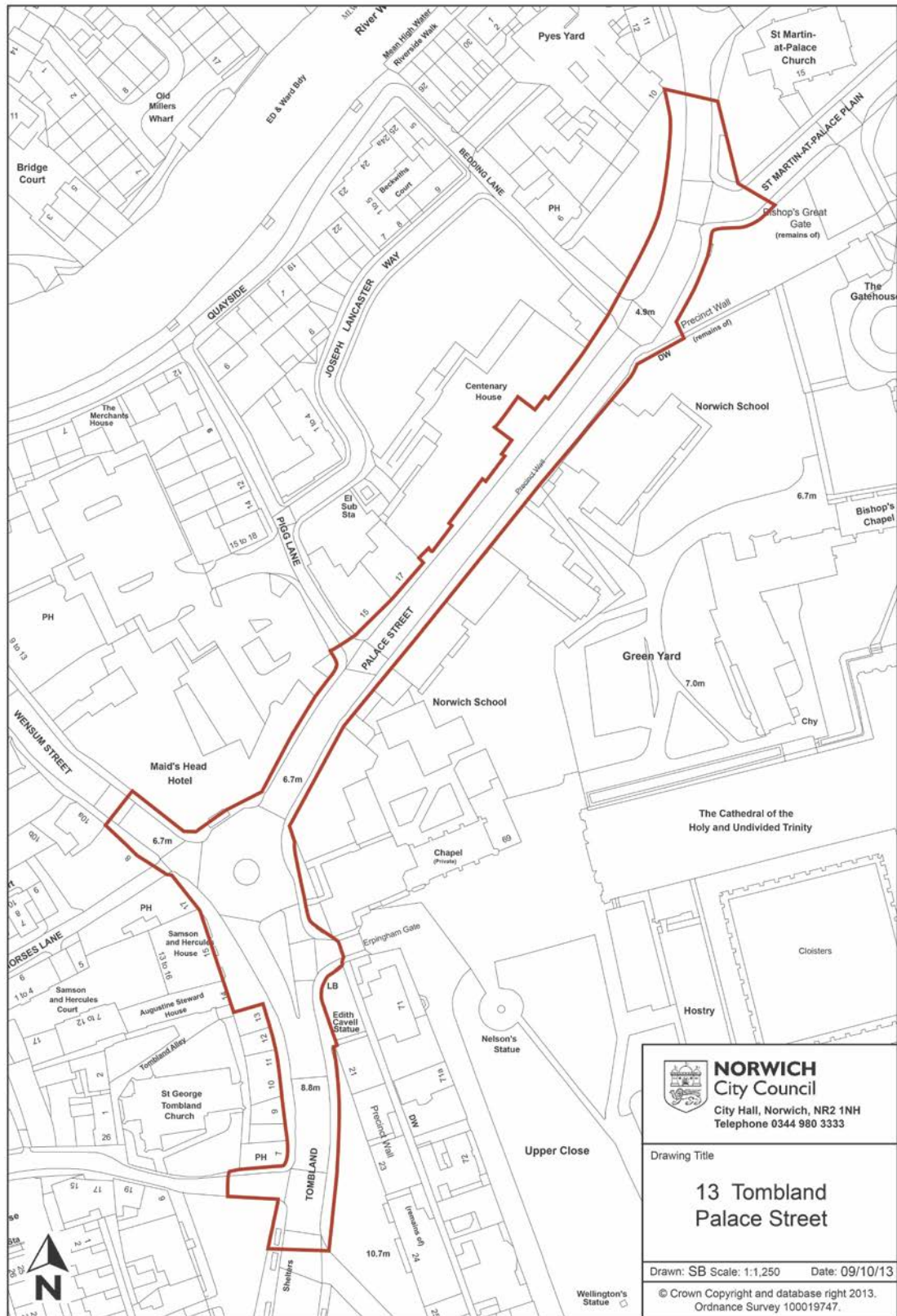
improvement on the current peak time ban), no loading will be allowed on the carriageway at any time.

33. The existing loading bay outside the Maids Head Hotel will need to be redesigned following the removal of the roundabout and this too will be detailed to merge with the footpath when it does not have vehicles parked on it.
34. On Palace Street unrestricted parking is currently allowed on street before 7:30am and after 6:30pm Monday to Saturday and all day on Sunday. In addition loading is allowed between 9:30am and 4:30pm Monday to Saturday. With the narrower carriageway any vehicle stopped in Palace Street will cause significant disruption to the flow of traffic. It is therefore proposed to introduce a no waiting, no loading restriction at any time on Palace Street on both sides of the road between Tombland and St Martin at Palace Plain. Most properties here have off street loading facilities, and those that do not can be serviced from Pigg Lane or Bedding Lane. Local off street car parks can accommodate evening and Sunday parking.
35. The coach parking bay on Princes Street by the junction with St Martin at Palace Plain will need to be shortened by approximately 10 metres to accommodate the two way cycle track, but will still be 22 metres long.

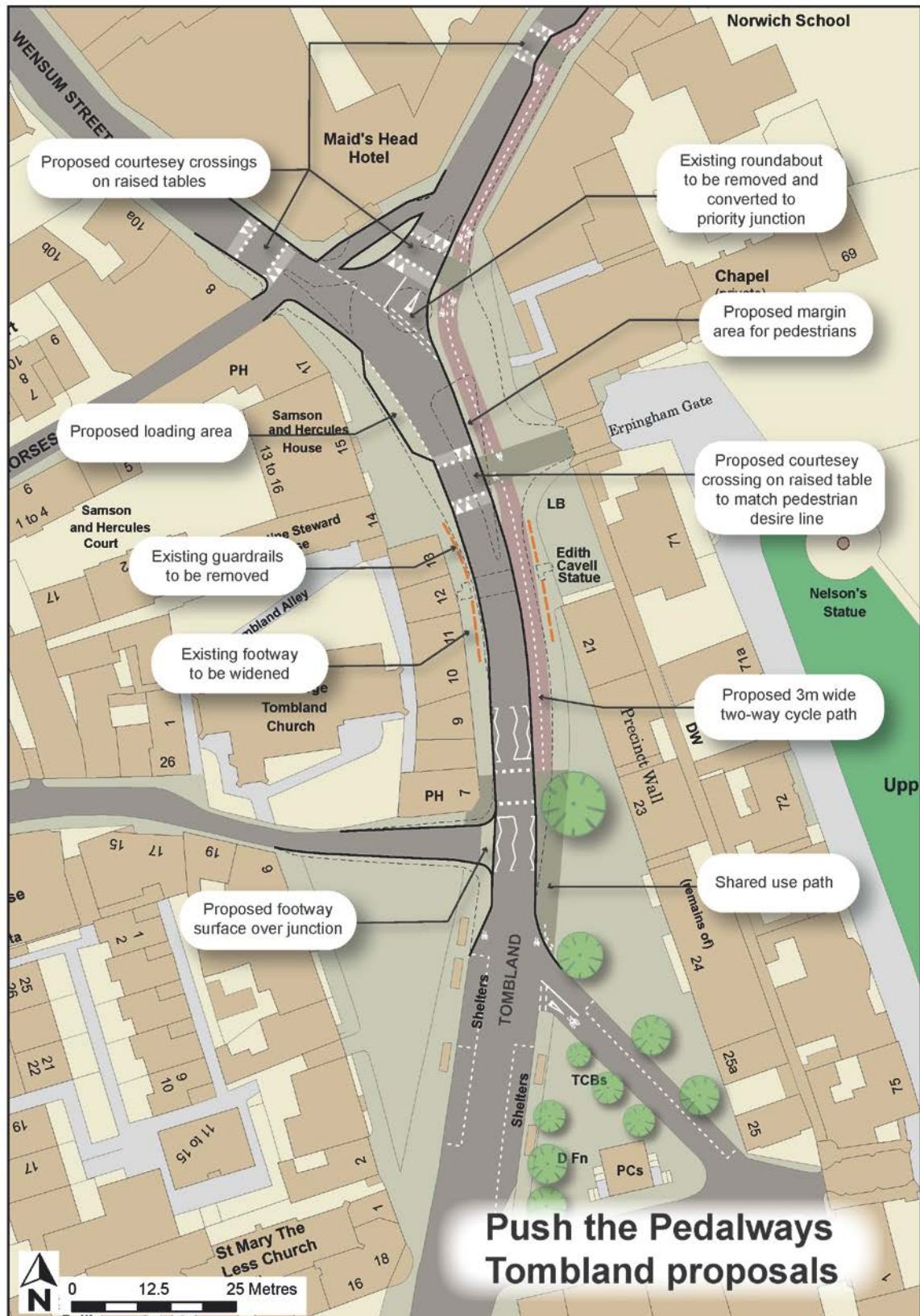
### **Consultation**

36. It is intended that public consultation is carried out on these proposals in July. Any objections will then be brought before this committee in September for consideration. Construction work is planned for early 2015.
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# Appendix 1 – Location Plan



## Appendix 2 – Tombland proposals



### Appendix 3 – Palace Street proposals

