

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****16:05 to 18:50****17 March 2016**

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Maxwell (vice chair), , Coleshill, Grahame, Haynes, Jackson (substitute for Bogelein, Manning, Peek, Packer, Raby, Ryan, Sands (M) (substitute for Sands (S)) and Schmierer

Apologies: Councillors Bogelein and Sands (S)

Also present: Councillor Bremner (cabinet member for environment and sustainable development) and Stonard (cabinet member for resources and income generation)  
Tracy Jessop (Norfolk County Council, assistant director, travel and transport services)  
Jon Barnard (Norfolk County Council, major projects manager)  
David Alfrey (Norfolk County Council, NATS manager)

**1. Public questions / petitions**

The chair said that public questions would be taken during item 6 below.

**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 25 February 2016

**4. Scrutiny committee work programme 2015 -2016**

**RESOLVED** to note the scrutiny committee work programme 2015-2016

**5. Annual scrutiny review**

The chair presented the annual review.

**RESOLVED** to recommend the annual scrutiny review for approval at the next available meeting of full council.

## **6. Review of management and delivery of Push the Pedalways**

The chair welcomed the stakeholders and public in attendance.

He said that the item would begin with officer presentations, followed by stakeholder presentations, questions from members of the public and then the discussion by the scrutiny committee. A summary of responses received from the public was circulated to members (a copy is attached as an appendix to these minutes.)

The executive head of regeneration and development presented the report. He stressed that investment in cycling is the cornerstone of the Transport for Norwich strategy and reminded members that the funding for the pedalways was provided by government and was ring-fenced for cycling improvements – it could not be used for any other purposes.

The conservation and design manager gave an overview of the implementation of the scheme with the aid of a presentation (appended to these minutes) He said that after consultation and gaining committee approval, the city centre area would be a 20mph zone. Signage for the pedalways was being installed showing distances and destinations. Redundant street furniture was being removed to reduce maintenance costs.

The transportation and network manager explained the challenges faced by officers. She said that there had been extensive consultation with the public. The focus in the original designs had been very much on cyclists and she said that more consideration could have been given to all road users. There was a very short time period to put the bid together and the programme had to constantly be reshaped. She said that lessons had been learnt from the challenges.

The head of city development services said that external advice had been commissioned and lessons learnt from the pink pedalway would be applied to the next phase of the programme with the blue and yellow pedalways. He said the going forward, there would be greater feasibility work to inform bids and there would only be consultation on what was buildable and affordable. There needed to balance between ambition and pragmatism.

Edward Bates, on behalf of the Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind (NNAB), said he was happy with the communications with the NNAB and a good working relationship had developed between the council and the NNAB. Where it was possible to accommodate small changes, the officers had been happy to do so. However, the NNAB found that it was more difficult to persuade officers to accept the more significant suggestions it made. For example, the use of shared spaces caused problems for the visually impaired and three signal crossings had been removed which had a significant impact. The NNAB submitted a report on the removal of a signal crossing on Ber Street which would have been different had they known about the removal of a crossing on Westlegate. He said that this brought the transparency of some decisions into question. If a project had a detrimental effect, it should not be considered a success and he did not feel that Push the Pedalways was delivered successfully.

Paul Burrell, on behalf of the Norwich Society, said that it recognised that an unfortunate timescale had been imposed but the scheme would have benefited from much more early stage design, consultation and planning. The Norwich Society

were disappointed that Tombland had not been designed as a whole, so that when money became available, the northern part of the area could be redesigned. Palace Street was impossible to use at busy times as it was too narrow. He suggested looking to other European countries such as Denmark for successful cycling schemes.

Margaret Todd, on behalf of the Norwich Cycling Campaign., said that its members wished to congratulate the city council for wanting to improve cycling in the city but had been disappointed with the outcome. The consultation had been good until late changes needed to be made to the project and at this point, it felt that the focus on cycling had been lost. It had frustrations over short, shared spaces and considered that piecemeal provision would not encourage more cycling. There had been some good improvements in the north of the city but believed that Tombland only catered for small groups and the needs of busses had been put before cyclists. She put forward three proposals for the committee to consider in its discussions:-

- As there was no national policy on cycling infrastructure, perhaps Norwich City Council could lead on this
- In the future, it may be better not to build compromised options
- Build into the process, that as projects came up for their safety audits, these came to the scrutiny committee or the Norwich Highways Agency committee (NHAC) for consideration.

The Chair said that two public questions had been received. The first public question was from Mrs. Chris Gough (this question was asked by Mr Jolyon Gough as her proxy).

“The Avenues between Colman Road and College Road is a major route for pedestrians, cyclists and commercial/private vehicles. Major traffic congestion has led to serious road safety issues and extensive degradation to the grass verges and trees.

Why was £ ¾ million spent on road and verge side improvements either end of the sections and not one penny between Colman Road and College Road?”

The head of city development services replied:

“We are aware that during school drop off and collection times this section of The Avenues can be congested, particularly around the Recreation Road and Christchurch Road junctions. However throughout the rest of the day traffic levels are light. The surveys we commissioned in November 2013 showed that over 3000 vehicles a day used the section of The Avenues between Bluebell Road and Colman Road, compared to less than 2000 that used the section between Colman Road and College Road.

National guidance recommends the introduction of traffic calming and 20 mph speed limits to help cyclists in areas with lower traffic volumes. Given that all of these elements are in place between Colman Road and College Road there is no need for any additional provision

With regard to the verge improvements that were carried out, these were targeted to the outer section of The Avenues as it was in this area that the problems were more widespread.”

Mr Gough asked the following supplementary question:

“Almost 2000 children attend schools along the roads in question and the volume of traffic from the UEA to the city is extremely heavy. The pedalway to the UEA brings pressures from all road users on that road and there needs to be some investment. We submitted a report on this matter, on which we have yet to receive a response.”

The head of city development services replied:

“We will be responding formally to your report. Although volumes of traffic are high at peak periods, this has to be compared with other areas of the city. The volumes of school children have changed over the years with the expansion of local schools. We have done as much as we can within the pedalways scheme and would look at other options in the future if funding became available.”

The second public question was received from Mr Richard Bearman:

“I understand that The Avenues Pedalways project for hybrid cycle lanes, was unable to be delivered as designed, due to problems encountered with tree roots during construction. Will the committee recommend that if any future pedalways project encounters similar issues during construction, that instead of going ahead with a radically modified scheme, that the council will halt construction and re-consult with the stakeholders and the public, to prevent building an expensive scheme that neither benefits cyclists, pedestrians nor motor vehicle users?”

The head of city development services replied:

“Obviously I cannot speak on behalf of the committee, it will be up to them to decide at the end of the meeting what recommendations they wish to make. You will hear this evening that we have learnt many lessons from the delivery of the first round of cycle ambition funding (CCAG1) however to help ensure that we never find ourselves in a similar position. The implemented scheme contains the safety improvements at the Colman Road & George Borrow Road junctions, alongside the vastly improved pedestrian crossing at Bunnett Square which were part of the original scheme. I would also point out that the scheme that has been ultimately implemented in The Avenues was one of the 3 options that we originally consulted on in May 2014, and at the time it was the most popular. Looking back at the consultation 25% wanted a full closure on The Avenues 23% wanted a bus gate and 44% wanted the advisory cycle lane option (The other 8% did not express a preference). At the time officers believed that there was a better solution than the advisory cycle lanes which is why the hybrid lane idea was progressed. Unfortunately this proved not to be the case.”

Mr Bearman asked the following supplementary question:

“In future, can officers and the committee consider spending more money on education and signage in the next scheme, so that cyclists and the visually impaired can use the roads more safely?”

The head of city development services replied:

“This was capital investment, therefore it was difficult to produce an education programme for cyclists and road users on new schemes.”

Discussion ensued around the push the pedalways scheme. In response to member's questions and comments, the following responses were provided:-

The head of city development services said that the council needed to work with the community to ensure that newly restored verges were maintained appropriately and Traffic Regulation Orders were in place to enforce against parking on these.

The transportation and network manager said that cycling contraflows were new to Norwich and the contraflow on Essex Street was being carefully monitored. The data collected from this would be analysed in due course which should highlight whether any additional speed measures were needed.

The assistant director of travel and transport services (Norfolk County Council) said that any expenditure incurred by Norwich City Council or Norfolk County Council, with regard to the resurfacing issues, would be refunded by TARMAC.

The cabinet member for resources and income generation said that the Push the Pedalways executive board had arranged dedicated meetings with ward councillors to discuss proposals for their ward in detail which provided a level of scrutiny and feedback.

The transport and network manager said that it had been envisioned that signage would be the first aspect to be completed but as the route changed, it could not be signed until the final course was implemented.

Members raised concerns around the consultation, including the lack of traffic data at the start of the consultation, the idea that larger changes felt likely to go ahead no matter what the public opinion and going forward, the plans to involve residents at an earlier stage of the project. The transport and network manager guaranteed that traffic data would be available from the beginning of any future consultations. She said that for the next stage of the pedalways project, residents in the Eaton, Cringleford and Colney areas were invited to complete an online survey with their views on problems in this area and what they would like to see happen next. This survey informed the design brief for the next stage of the pedalways. Any changes to the design of the pink pedalway had been summarised in reports to NHAC but conceded that maybe these changes could have been communicated to the public in a different way.

The cabinet member for resources and income generation challenged the idea that larger changes went ahead without considering the views of public. The plans to close Park Lane were not progressed after listening to public opinion.

Members discussed the improvements in public health that an increased uptake in cycling could bring. The strategy manager said that national data sets from the National Health Service would already be in progress and he would circulate this information to members along with information on air quality and active travel.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) To promote the vision for Transport for Norwich to gain a better understanding of what the vision is,
- 2) To continue to support and facilitate the active engagement of stakeholders,

- 3) In the absence of a national strategy, to continue to use the London Design Standard,
- 4) That all junctions would be reviewed for cycle – proofing when being worked on,
- 5) To bring the independent report, referred to at paragraph 42 of the report, to the scrutiny committee for consideration,
- 6) To look at options around working with partners to develop a cycling education programme,
- 7) To consider commissioning research into the long term health benefits of the pedalways scheme; and
- 8) To bring the post implementation safety audits of any new highways projects to the relevant committee.

CHAIR