



MINUTES

NORWICH HIGHWAYS AGENCY COMMITTEE

10am to 10.55am

20 March 2014

Present:

County Councillors:

Adams (chair) (V)
Harrison (V)
Bremner
Hebborn
Spratt (substitute for
Councillor Shaw)

*(V) voting member

City Councillors:

Stonard (vice chair) (V)
Harris (V)
Carlo
Gayton
Grahame

Apologies:

County Councillor Shaw

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1 – Brazengate 'bus gate'

Mr Nigel Harvey (R T Harvey Ltd, Butchers, Grove Road) asked the following question:

"Please can you explain why the police have been asked to enforce the restrictions on through traffic using Brazengate 'bus gate'. As a business owner on Grove Road since 1985 I have seen no logical reason for the continuance of this system. If enforced it has and will continue to drive traffic down either down the already congested St Stephens or more importantly along Hall Road (a narrower road with parked cars both sides - queuing from the Hewitt School is a regular occurrence) all the way to the dangerous emergence of traffic at an uncontrolled junction on a blind bend at Bracondale. There have been several accidents and countless near misses here leading to what will inevitably be a potentially fatal collision.

Having monitored the limited number of buses and passengers that use the Brazen Gate during the restrictive times, this practice just does not make sense; combined with the fact that a large volume of traffic is allowed from Sainsbury car park without restriction."

The transportation and network manager (Norwich City Council) responded on behalf of the committee:

"Back in the mid-1990s when the park and ride was first introduced at the Livestock Market (now B&Q) a bus gate was introduced in the morning peak time between Grove Road and Brazengate, along with the controlled parking zone in the area. This was to encourage car drivers to use the park and ride (P&R) and give the P&R buses a time advantage over general traffic, making it more attractive. To this day the Harford P&R bus uses this route. The bus gate also has the advantage of stopping rat running traffic through the Cecil Road / Grove Avenue / Trafford Road area and past the Hewett School which was the subject of much complaint at the time.

The city council regularly receives complaints about the lack of enforcement of the bus gate restriction from members of the public and always passes these on to Norfolk Constabulary who is responsible for carrying out enforcement. Due to pressures on police resources they are only able to enforce the restriction sporadically. Consideration has been given to looking at alternative methods of enforcement, such as camera enforcement, but to date no conclusions have been reached.

Removing the bus gate would suck significant amounts of traffic through the residential area and would be a retrograde step in delivering the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy which looks to promote and encourage bus usage. Revoking the traffic regulation order that backs the restriction would involve the same process that we have to go through to secure a TRO; we would need to carry out a statutory consultation and this committee would need to consider the results of that consultation before making a final decision. I am confident that while undoubtedly some people would like the restriction removed, there would be a significant number of objections from residents who do not want to see the return of the rat-running traffic.

I also need to remind members that there is no budget available for such a consultation. Should members be minded to reconsider the future of the Brazengate Bus Gate then a bid for funding will need to be considered at your November meeting when the work programme for 15-16 is agreed."

Mr Harrison, pointed out that the removal of the gate would divert traffic to pass through Grove Road rather "rat running" than through Hall Road and City Road and asked by way of a supplementary question, asked how many buses used the bus lane and whether the alternative routes had been monitored. The transportation and network manager said that there was a road hierarchy and Grove Road was a residential road whilst City Road and Hall Road were both C roads and would be expected to have more traffic. She said that the bus route was used by Park and ride buses and that there would need to be a survey to provide the detail of the traffic use.

Question 2 – Traffic calming in Recorder Road

(Councillor Stonard, vice-chair, declared an other interest in this question in that he was resident in the area.)

Mrs Ann Boden, Recorder Road, asked the following question:

"Why can we not have a slow speed traffic sign on Recorder Road? Recorder Road is nearly all retirement complexes with a lot of elderly residents. There is lots of traffic that use Recorder Road as there is a car park. Also there are taxis all day and night long. The traffic comes speeding round the corner and some of the elderly residents are using walking frames, etc. to cross the road. There will be an accident one of these days as motorists don't slow down when coming round the corner.

All we want is a slow speed sign. I was in touch by e-mail to the highways department last year and they told me it was a minor back street. That might be so, but there is a lot of traffic and elderly residents."

The transportation and network manager responded on behalf of the committee:

"As the committee is aware the Department for Transport has awarded the city Cycle City Ambition funding to implement the pink pedalway. One of the 22 projects is to ensure that all residential roads within the vicinity of the route are subject to a 20mph speed restriction. This covers all streets within the inner ring road, including Recorder Road.

Full details of the 20mph proposals will be brought to this committee later this summer, with public consultation expected to take place in the early autumn and implementation in 2015.

As a 20mph speed limit is already planned for Recorder Road, installing any additional signage in the area cannot be justified at the current time."

Mrs Boden explained that she was concerned that someone would be killed on the road.

At the chair's discretion, the vice-chair said that the city council had just announced a twelve-point action plan to improve the night-time economy zone which included a proposal to close the side streets off Prince of Wales Road on Saturday nights to Sunday morning. There would still be access to residents but it would mean that through traffic, rat-running and taxis did not have access. He also pointed out that the plan was to remove through traffic from Prince of Wales Road in 2017 and to make Rose Lane two-way. This would remove some of the traffic from the area which was causing a problem to local residents and he hoped that this gave Mrs Boden some reassurance.

Question 3 – Road maintenance in Mile Cross

Mr Richard Edwards, Mile Cross resident, asked the following question:

“Half Mile Road in Mile Cross estate faces a number of problems, including being used as a rat run between Aylsham Road and Mile Cross Road; cars speeding between junctions; and also potholes – some as much as three feet long.

Can the committee do something positive about these issues – such as re-surfacing, and carrying out carefully considered traffic-calming measures?”

The transportation and network manager responded on behalf of the committee:

"The potholes have occurred where the previous surface dressing has been stripped off. As such, while some of these are long, they are shallow defects that do not require urgent attention. Tar and chip patching has been ordered and will be carried out in May or June.

Currently, the budget for resurfacing C and U roads is extremely limited and there are no plans to resurface this road; locations where surface dressing is not appropriate such as roundabouts are the focus of the resurfacing programme. We will look at the road with a view for including it on a future surface dressing programme.

With regard to traffic calming, due to pressures on budgets traffic calming or speed limit reduction can only be considered if there is a proven accident problem involving speed or it is part of a wider project, such as the pink pedalway I mentioned earlier. The accident record shows that in the last 5 years there has been no injury accidents reported along Half Mile Road. Therefore as things stand there is no mechanism for justifying traffic calming features on Half Mile Road at the current time.”

Mr Edwards asked that officers ensured that the repair to the pot-holes reached the edges where the damage started. The transportation and network manager said that she would pass on his concerns to the highways engineers.

Question 4

Councillor Little, Town Close Ward, asked the following question:

“Norwich City Council last gave full consideration to the issue of verge parking in September 2006, at which time traffic regulation orders (TROs) and verge reconstruction were recommended in selected areas. Many of the same problems highlighted in that report still persist (eg unsightly and costly damage, safety risks). Since that time other issues have emerged such as illegal car sales from verges. There is also increased awareness of sustainable urban drainage and the problems associated with replacing grass and planted areas with hard-standing. Will the council look into ways to protect and maintain verges in light of current circumstances and best practice, including consulting with and involving residents, and issue an updated report and recommendations?”

The transportation and network manager responded on behalf of the committee:

“As Councillor Little says, the city council, through its executive committee, considered a report in September 2006 looking at all the issues around verge parking. That report concluded that in some areas the use of traffic regulation orders and careful positioning of street furniture could address the verge parking issues. However, in the majority of areas where there were no alternative parking provision available for residents then the only feasible way to address the problem was to reconstruct the verge and provide parking bays. The executive recognised that this would involve significant costs, (in the order of several million pounds), and that it would be unrealistic to expect the highways budget would fund them. They agreed to consider funding verge reconstruction and parking bays as part of the city’s council capital plan.

In May 2007 this committee endorsed the executive’s report and allocated funding for the traffic regulation orders and physical measures to prevent verge parking in certain areas. Following consultation these were installed in 2008.

Since that time the financial pressure on both the city and county council’s budgets have deepened significantly and it has not been possible to embark on a programme of verge reconstruction. These pressures remain and it is extremely unlikely that either the city council through the capital programme or the highways agency committee will be in a position to afford widespread verge protection measures for the foreseeable future.

Carrying out any sort of public consultation without funding in place cannot be justified.

On a more positive note the issue of cars for sale on the verges is under active consideration by the parking enforcement team and it is hoped that this can be progressed in the coming months.”

Councillor Little said that he welcomed the enforcement to prevent businesses operating car sales from grass verges. He asked whether it was possible for a voluntary group to restore the grass verges. The transportation and networks manager said that she would provide a written response to this supplementary question.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no further declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2014.

4. PUSH THE PUSH THE PEDALWAYS - MAGDALEN STREET AND COWGATE CYCLE CONTRA-FLOW

During discussion the transportation and network manager referred to the report and answered questions. A member expressed concern about the loss of the signalled crossing on Magdalen Street by Magdalen Close and asked whether there had been any comments from people with visual impairments as the headquarters of the Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind was in the vicinity. It was noted that this crossing was used as a formal signalled crossing point by very few people, with the pedestrian phase being called just 24 times in 24 hours whereas the crossing in Tombland was called 72 times in 1 hour. Members were also advised that the low level signals at the junction were beneficial to cyclists as they are in their direct sight line. The technology was also being considered at the Colman Road and the Avenues. Magdalen Road was part of the Blue pedalway and therefore the proposals were compatible with the scheme.

RESOLVED, with all 4 voting members voting in favour, unanimously, to

- (1) approve in principle the proposals to introduce contra flow cycling on Magdalen Street between Edward Street and Bull Close Road and on Cowgate between Magdalen Street and Peacock Street and asks that public consultation is carried out on these proposals
- (2) ask 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 301739 CA11 PE4080 PRE-02a & 03a – and plan PL/TR/4142/224.2 & 3, which will have the effect of:
 - (a) banning the right turn from Magdalen Street into Bull Close Road
 - (b) introducing a mandatory southbound cycle lane on Magdalen Street between Bull Close Road and Edward Street and an advisory westbound cycle lane on Cowgate between Peacock Street and Magdalen Street
 - (c) Amend the position of the parking and loading bays on Magdalen Street to and the disabled bay on Cowgate
 - (d) Remove the signalled crossing on Magdalen Street by Magdalen Close.

5. CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES: MISCELLANEOUS WAITING RESTRICTIONS/AMENDMENTS/REPRESENTATION RECEIVED

The transportation and networks manager presented the report and referred to the supplementary report circulated at the meeting which contained further objections received. Photographs and plans were displayed. It was proposed to withdraw the proposals for Corton Road to allow for the highways engineers to work on a solution for the footway in the light of the comments from members of the public. Members were advised that the officer response on page 23 to representations received on

representations received for Gaol Hill should be amended to state that “The loading bay is currently unenforceable due to, etc”.

During discussion the parking manager (operations), Norwich City Council, answered questions on enforcement of loading bays in Gaol Hill and St Peters Street. Members considered that it was important to market traders that members of the public could use the loading bays but that the time of use should not be extended beyond 15 minutes or the bays would become short stay parking bays and fewer people could use them.

Councillor Hebborn suggested that use of the parking bay in Waterloo Road be reduced from 2 hours to 30 minutes maximum use. He suggested that the local shops would benefit from having more shoppers using the bay and a shorter period would deter other users.

RESOLVED unanimously, with all 4 voting members voting in favour, to delete Corton Road from the recommendation and to reduce the waiting time in Waterloo Road from 2 hours to 30 minutes and therefore to authorise the head of city development services to arrange for the necessary statutory procedures to implement waiting restrictions as advertised previously as detailed below and in appendix 1 and to make the corrections to traffic regulation order descriptions as detailed in appendix 2.

Location		Plan number
1.	Duke Street	PL/TR/3329/737-2
2.	Gaol Hill	PL/TR/3329/737-9
3.	Magdalen Close	PL/TR/3329/737-7
4.	Magdalen Street	PL/TR/3329/737-8
5.	Riverside (adj riverside path)	PL/TR/3329/737-10
6.	Saunders Court	PL/TR/3329/737-3
7.	Thorpe Road	PL/TR/3329/737-4
8.	Waterloo Road	PL/TR/3329/737-5 as amended.
9.	Wessex Street	PL/TR/3329/737-6

6. MAJOR ROAD WORKS – REGULAR MONITORING

The transportation and network manager reported that, following the high court ruling, the Grapes Hill bus lane, St Stephens Street and Chapel Field North scheme could now progress.

RESOLVED to note the report.

7. COMMITTEE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2014-15

RESOLVED to approve the following schedule of meetings for the civic year 2014-15, all meetings to be at 10am and held at City Hall:-

12 June 2014
24 July 2014
25 September 2014
27 November 2014
22 January 2015
19 March 2015

CHAIR