

Report on North East Quadrant – Scheme 2 St Augustine's Street Gyratory (Traffic Network Management Scheme)

Report by the Director of Planning and Transportation and
Director of Regeneration and Development

Summary

This report advises the Committee of the outcomes on consultation and advertising of related traffic regulation orders for the St Augustine's Street Traffic Gyratory Scheme and seeks approval to confirm the related Traffic Regulation Orders.

1. Background

- 1.1. At their meeting on 13 March 2008, Members considered a report setting out the proposals for the St Augustine's Street Traffic Gyratory and gave their approval to proceed to community consultation and to advertise the associated Traffic Regulation Orders relating to the traffic management aspects of the scheme.
- 1.2. This report discusses the responses received to the consultation and the statutory advertising of the Traffic Regulation Orders.
- 1.3. The committee are again asked to note that planning matters relating to the redevelopment of Anglia Square Shopping Centre remain on-going and incorporate aspects of the proposed gyratory scheme, in particular the proposed new highway link between Edward Street and Pitt Street. This means that the scheme itself cannot progress on the ground until Planning Permission has been obtained. Amendments to the existing on-street waiting arrangements, and the provision of new bus stops will also be required in due course, and the statutory processes relating to these will be progressed once the Anglia Square scheme has been finalised.

2. Consultation Process and Responses

- 2.1. The scheme proposals are indicated on the attached plan, Appendix 1.
- 2.2. Initial consultation with the local community began on 9 April 2008. Some 2350 letters were sent to properties broadly bounded by Oak Street, Eade Road, Waterloo Road (north), Magdalen Road, Magdalen Street, and St Crispin's Road, plus other stakeholders.



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- 2.3. Public exhibitions were held at St Augustine's Church Hall on 18 April between 10am and 6pm and at Anglia Square Shopping Centre on 19 April between 10am and 6pm. The exhibitions were attended by around 55 local residents on the first day and 165 on the second. A proforma style questionnaire was made available for their use and 81 questionnaires were subsequently returned.
- 2.4. Staff also attended on 17 April an evening meeting of the St Augustine's Community Together Residents Association.
- 2.5. The questionnaire asked a number of general questions. In response to the question 'Do you agree that there are traffic related problems in this area': 74 (92%) agreed and 4 (5%) disagreed. In answer to the question 'Do you think that road improvements are needed?': 68 (85%) agreed and 10 (12%) disagreed.
- 2.6. *The Norwich City Council (St Augustine's Street, Magpie Road, Esdelle Street and Bakers Road) (Traffic Management) Traffic Regulation Order 2008, and The Norwich City Council (St Augustine's Street, Magpie Road, Esdelle Street and Bakers Road) (20mph Zone) Speed Restriction Amendment Order 2008* were advertised between 2 May and 23 May 2008.
- 2.7. The proposed effects of the Traffic Management Order would be to introduce a one-way system along St Augustine's Street, Magpie Road, part of Esdelle Street, part of Edward Street and along a new link road to be constructed between Edward Street and Pitt Street. This would mean :
- all traffic would be required to travel northbound along St Augustine's street;
 - all traffic would be required to travel eastbound along Magpie Road between St Augustine's Street and Esdelle Street;
 - all traffic would be required to travel southbound on Esdelle Street (to its junction with Edward Street), Edwards Street (to its junction with the new link road) and on the new link road to its junction with Pitt Street with the exception that cycles would also be able to travel northbound;
 - through traffic would only be able to travel eastbound along the section of Edwards Street between the new link road and Magdalen Street (except buses, taxis, private hire vehicles and cycles and emergency vehicles which would also be able to travel westbound, and egress for existing premises will remain available westbound);
 - Bakers Road would be closed to through traffic at its eastern end, except for cycles and emergency vehicles (a new turning area is proposed).
- 2.8. The proposals in the Speed Restriction Amendment Order would introduce a 20mph Zone in St Augustine's Street, the section of Esdelle Street between St Augustine's Street and Edward Street, Leonard Street and Catherine Wheel

Opening.

- 2.9. In addition to the 81 proforma questionnaires, 17 other items of communication in the form of telephone comments, emails and letters have been received. These were mostly received in response to the general consultation. 4 items of correspondence were possibly in direct response to the formal advertising of the Traffic Regulation Orders. A summary of all the responses received is set out in Appendix 2.

3. **Discussion**

- 3.1. Considering the scale of the proposal and the extent of the consultation the number of formal responses received was small, although many of these did provide a high quality and detailed consideration on a range of issues. This has all usefully contributed to the scheme development and a number of suggestions can be incorporated into the detail design. Officers attending the two exhibitions are of the view that the proposals were generally well received.

- 3.2. The responses received had a number of themes and there was no dominant or single issue.

- 3.3. General Traffic related issues

There were a number of common traffic concerns raised relating to 'rat running' through residential side streets, general speeding and possible increases in traffic levels.

- 3.4. Traffic modelling indicates that the proposed gyratory will operate very effectively. The nature of the proposal means that there are changes in traffic volumes on this network, both up and down. The traffic model does not indicate significant adverse effects elsewhere. Additional pre-scheme traffic counts were carried out earlier this year across the local area to measure existing traffic flows and provide objective baseline data. The traffic counts will be repeated post construction. This will enable evidence based assessment of the scheme impacts.

- 3.5. Pedestrian issues

The proposals include improved pedestrian crossing facilities at St Augustine's Gate and there was a considerable amount of support for this. In addition, it is proposed to widen the footways along St Augustine's Street and a number of crossing facilities will be introduced to cater for identified desire lines.

- 3.6. Cycling issues

Several responses related to provisions for cyclists, and possible interference with existing patterns of use. For instance the proposed one way section of Magpie Road may require west to east cyclists to vary their route. There is currently insufficient highway width to provide a contra flow facility, but there are, however, redevelopment sites to the north of Magpie Road, and the

opportunity to provide an east-west cycling route by incorporating part of those sites is actively being pursued.

- 3.7. There were several requests that a contra flow cycle route be provided southwards along St Augustine's Street. Whilst it would be advantageous to provide a direct route southwards along St Augustine's Street, a safe facility could not be provided as the available highway width precludes this. The scheme as designed has reduced the carriageway width on St Augustine's to the minimum that is practically possible, whilst retaining a safe width for cycling northbound, and although this has allowed for some selective pavement widening, there is insufficient space to provide a contra flow cycle route as well. This is particularly the case at the north end where it is necessary to provide two running lanes for traffic to ensure smooth operation of the St Augustine's Gate junction, and maximise the improvements to air quality that are the driver for this scheme. Cyclists will have the option of following the gyratory system or cutting through to Oak Street via Bakers Road, or routes further north, and using the existing crossing facilities on St Crispins Road.
- 3.8. The proposals are consistent with the identified key cycle route network and the key north-south route via Heath Road is maintained through the proposals.
- 3.9. A request was received to include advance cycle boxes at traffic signals and it is proposed that the detailed design be modified to include advance cycle boxes at the Aylsham Road approach to St Augustine's Gate junction, and at the Pitt Street approach to Duke Street roundabout.
- 3.10. Parking and Loading issues
- Concerns have been raised about existing and continuing disadvantage to businesses along St Augustine's Street caused by restricted loading and lack of customer parking. Restricted available road width will not allow consideration of on-street parking provision. However, it is proposed, as a change to the proposals, to provide an unloading/loading facility at the southern end of St Augustine's Street outside Coleman Opticians where space is available, and there may be some opportunity to revise existing on-street waiting restrictions particularly at the northern end of St Augustine's Street in particular where currently loading is not permitted at all. This will go some way to addressing these concerns.
- 3.11. The scheme requires the demolition of the blocks of garages at Magpie Road / Esdelle Street in order to modify the junction. It is currently intended to landscape this area and it is not proposed to rebuild garage blocks or provide replacement 'private' off street parking. However if this land is all to be appropriated to the highway it should be possible to provide some additional controlled parking zone parking by constructing a new on-street parking bay. This proposal will be progressed as the detail for the landscaping of this area is developed.
- 3.12. Scheme Option issues
- Several respondents asked that an option to pedestrianise St Augustine's

Street be reconsidered. However, whilst on the face of it such an approach to St Augustine's Street (creating a new two-way link along the proposed new link road) does have its attractions, modelling of this option demonstrated substantial adverse impacts on surrounding streets. A full closure of St Augustine's Street would require a longer route for both northbound and southbound traffic. There would be significant traffic pressures on Magpie Road and Edward Street, and would require the Magpie Road / Esdelle Street junction to be more complex. At a practical level a right turn lane in Magpie Road would be needed, which is not possible within the existing road width. Compared to the proposed scheme traffic would take longer to get around the system, and so effectively have less capacity. Aylsham Road and Drayton Road would see less traffic. Traffic not using these main routes would seek alternative roads, often less suitable for through traffic. In the morning St Martins Road would see more traffic and there would be more pressure on Magdalen Gates junction with further spilling into Spencer Street residential area. In the afternoon 'rat-running' in the Spencer Street area would increase and Silver Road would also see increases.

- 3.13. The scheme that is being progressed was considered the most acceptable of the four options that were looked at, during the 2006 issues and options consultation. The detailed development of this option was supported at the City Council's Executive (10 January 2007) and reconfirmed in previous reports to NHAJC. This is also the option contained in the Northern City Centre Area Action Plan (NCCAAP) – Preferred Options Report.
- 3.14. The purpose of the most recent consultation was therefore to consider the detail of the agreed preferred option. The scheme has had to satisfy a number of requirements such as reduction of pollution on St Augustine's Street, improving public transport links, maintaining links on this critical part of the strategic road network, improving the area for pedestrians and helping to regenerate the area. The agreed option provides the best balance to achieve the benefits sought, whilst minimising impact on other areas.
- 3.15. Comment was also made that as the NCCAAP adoption process is still on-going and a decision on the traffic scheme therefore premature. Whilst it would have been desirable to have completed the statutory processes on the NCCAAP this does not preclude either developer or highway schemes being brought forward in an interim period. The Councils have a statutory duty to address air quality issues, and the gyratory proposals also form part of the Greater Norwich Development Partnerships project, and both the St Augustine's Scheme, and the redevelopment of the Anglia Square area are being developed alongside the Area Action Plan. The redevelopment of this area is, in any case, a priority for the current adopted Local Plan.

4. **Resource Implications**

- 4.1. **Finance :** Funding for the scheme will be from approved Growth Point funding allocations.

4.2. **Staff** : The project will be delivered through joint team working involving County and City Officers and partners of the County Council's strategic partnership.

4.3. **Property** : The scheme will require dedication of land for highway use from the City Council, and land dedicated from the Anglia Square site Developer.

4.4. **IT** : None.

5. **Other implications**

5.1. **Legal Implications**: None.

5.2. **Human Rights**: None.

5.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**: A full programme of equality impact assessments has been carried out covering all Planning and Transportation activities.

5.4. **Communications**: None.

6. **Section 17 - Crime and Disorder Act**

6.1. The scheme will be designed to ensure it has a positive effect on crime and disorder where possible. Care will be taken during construction to minimise opportunities for crime and disorder, for instance the secure storage of construction equipment and materials.

7. **Risk Implications/Assessment**

7.1. Failure to progress this scheme would have implications relating to statutory obligations to implement an air quality improvement scheme, and would also impact on the traffic solutions relating to the proposed Anglia Square redevelopment.

7.2. A risk register is being maintained as part of the technical design and construction delivery processes.

8. **Alternative Options**

8.1. It is essential that work is undertaken within the St Augustine's Street area to resolve existing air quality issues. Four alternative options have been examined, and no other affordable options have been forthcoming during previous consultations (the suggested link between Drayton Road/ Aylsham road, via a bridge to the Barn Road Roundabout would be prohibitively expensive, as well as environmentally intrusive). The recommended proposal appears to deliver the best solution in terms of the identified scheme objectives, whilst minimising adverse impacts in the surrounding area.

9. **Conclusion**

9.1. The comments expressed at the exhibitions and the generally low level of written response to the consultation indicates a broad level of acceptance of

the scheme proposals.

- 9.2. The consultation has proved useful in helping develop the detailed design. For instance the proposals have been modified to take better account of cyclists, to provide a loading/unloading facility on St Augustine's Street, to modify the turning head design in Bakers Road, to review pedestrian crossing points, to review private access details and to consider additional on street parking near Edward Street.
- 9.3. The scheme will deliver air quality improvements and fulfil statutory duties in respect of the declared St Augustine's AQMA. The scheme will contribute to the regeneration of the Northern City Centre by streetscape enhancement of St Augustine's Street and helping to improve opportunities for public transport.
- 9.4. The scheme detail is still being reviewed to maximise the overall benefits to all users. An area of particular importance is that adjacent to Anglia Square as it is critical that the scheme is compatible with proposals to redevelop Anglia Square Shopping Centre, the layout of which is currently being considered.

Recommendation

- 1 Members are recommended to agree that the scheme as described can proceed whilst noting that Planning Permission is required for the new link road, and that this will be sought as part of the proposals for the regeneration of Anglia Square
- 2 Members are recommended to authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to implement in due course *The Norwich City Council (St Augustine's Street, Magpie Road, Esdelle Street and Bakers Road) (Traffic Management) Traffic Regulation Order 2008*, and *The Norwich City Council (St Augustine's Street, Magpie Road, Esdelle Street and Bakers Road) (20mph Zone) Speed Restriction Amendment Order 2008*

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Background Document (s) :		