



NORWICH HIGHWAYS AGENCY COMMITTEE

10.00 am – 11.00 am

27 January 2011

Present:

County Councillors:

Adams (Chair) (V)
Plant (V)
Bearman
Scutter
Shaw

City Councillors:

Bremner (Vice-Chair) (V)
Read (V) (until item 5)
Altman
MacDonald

*(V) – Voting Member

Apologies:

City Councillor Morpew

1. PETITIONS

Sussex Street car parking

Councillor Bearman, councillor for Mancroft division, presented the following petition on behalf of local businesses:-

“As traders in the St Augustine’s area we are concerned that the recent loss of short term parking to ‘residents only use’ has had an impact on our businesses. While accepting the concerns of residents it is not reasonable that during the working day there are empty ‘residents only’ parking spaces available. We would like the relevant council committee to consider a more equitable balance to the shared use between residents and our potential customers in these spaces.”

The transportation manager, Norwich City Council, said that surveys had been undertaken since the implementation of the change in parking arrangements which showed that the limited waiting bays were never more than two-thirds full and that there were still spaces in the permit parking bays. Given all the roadworks in the area associated with the new gyratory scheme it would be premature to blame loss of trade on the change of short term parking to ‘residents only use’. Time should be allowed for the benefits of all the changes to take effect before being reconsidered.

Councillor Bremner referred to the St Augustine’s gyratory road system and said that the benefits of the wider pavements and cleaner air in the St Augustine’s area should mean that the traders could look to a positive future. Councillor Shaw said that in his

experience there were not sufficient parking spaces and that he had sympathy with the petitioners.

2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Grit bins, Town Close Ward

Councillor Little, ward and divisional councillor for Town Close Ward, asked the following question:

“I have raised the matter of several steep, well used and densely populated streets in Town Close which are without a grit bin, despite satisfying the criteria for one. These include Newmarket Street, Rutland Street, Chester Street, and also Rupert Street which, in recent icy conditions, the refuse lorry was unable to negotiate and several residents went without a collection as a result. In many streets, such as Theobald Road in Lakenham, residents have spoken of literally been trapped in their homes during icy weather. In the winter of 2009 Norwich City Council received 90 requests for grit bins and in 2010 there were 100 such requests, and yet the council was only in a position to finance 6 new grit bins. Given that it is likely that cold winters could become a more regular occurrence in future years, at what point will this unacceptable situation be addressed?”

The head of transport, Norwich City Council, referred to the constraints on the councils' budgets and said that there was a review of grit bin provision each summer to ensure the maximum benefit is achieved from the present stock and to consider if additional bins would be beneficial and can be funded. Following the review of the Norwich Highways Agency agreement, the county council would be undertaking the responsibility of filling grit bins and gritting roads next year.

Councillor Little said that the winter maintenance programme needed to take account of the severe winters and involve the community as this was a serious issue.

Councillor Plant suggested that residents should be encouraged to take on the responsibility of replenishing the grit bins themselves. Councillor Bremner said that Councillor Little had raised this question at the city council's full council meeting on 25 January 2011; and though he understood the problems, particularly in the hilly areas of Norwich, there was a question of where the funding would come from to provide more grit bins.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Read declared a personal interest in item 5, Bowthorpe Road zebra crossing, as he lived in the vicinity.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2010, subject to the following addition to item 2, Public Question, question 1, Mount Pleasant / Albermarle Road, by inserting:

“Councillor Scutter asked that members took on board Ms Savill’s statements in her question that Norwich City Council had not replied to a letter sent by residents of Mount Pleasant / Albermarle Road on 6 October 2010”.

5. BOWTHORPE ROAD ZEBRA CROSSING

(Councillor Read had declared a personal interest in this item.)

A representative of local businesses addressed the committee and outlined her objections to a zebra crossing on Bowthorpe Road which included: its position would break the flow of traffic and there was another crossing further up the road; it would only benefit people going into the cemetery and that the cost of it could not be justified when there were other highway improvements that were of greater priority such as a crossing at the bottom of Bowthorpe Road; large vehicles needed to access the shops in Bowthorpe Road and there was a shortage of parking spaces; also one business had been trading since 1977 and was aware of only one accident during that period.

Councillor Read then spoke in support of the revised option 2 proposal for a zebra crossing on Bowthorpe Road. The crossing on Bowthorpe Road was 100 yards away and was too far for pedestrians without taking a detour. The cemetery was a recognised cycle and pedestrian route. The zebra crossing on Bowthorpe Road would provide equivalent provision in the north to the Earlham Road crossing on the other side of the cemetery. There were 38 signatures on the original petition but there could have been many more and there had been 13 letters of support for the crossing.

Councillor Read moved and Councillor Altman seconded that the recommendations 1 and 3 in the report, should be deleted, and that the committee approved the installation of the zebra crossing at the option 2 revised location.

Councillor Scutter said that to walk 200 yards to a crossing was not excessive and wondered how many people would have responded to the option of ‘no crossing’ at all had been an option. Councillor Shaw considered that to prevent cars parking there could be a short space where 20mph limit was imposed with zigzag lines like those outside schools. Councillor Bremner said that cemetery was a “delightful through route” but that on balance there was not enough support for a crossing in Bowthorpe Road and there were other areas across the city that could benefit from crossings. Councillor Bearman considered that the location of the crossing would not help cyclists and given the financial constraints £55k should not be spent on a crossing that was not supported.

Discussion ensued in which the transportation manager referred to the report and addressed the issues raised. The consultation had been on the options 1 and 2 and the revised option and consultees had the opportunity to state if they did not want a crossing. There had been 8 accidents on Bowthorpe Road but none of these were in the location of the proposed crossing or major ones. A short stretch of 20 mph would be unlikely to be effective. Members were advised that if the scheme was approved it would limit funding for other schemes.

The Chair moved that Councillor Read’s amendment should be put to the vote.

RESOLVED, with 1 member voting in favour (Councillor Read) and 3 members voting against (Councillors Adams, Plant and Bremner) the amendment was lost.

Councillor Read then moved that recommendation 2 be removed and with the other voting members in agreement the Chair then put the recommendations as amended to the vote.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note results of the consultations on the two alternative locations for a zebra crossing on Bowthorpe Road;
- (2) approve the installation of appropriate warning signs and road markings on the approaches to the cemetery entrance.

(Councillor Read left the meeting at this point.)

6. KETTS HILL PEDESTRIAN REFUGE

Councillor Bearman said that he approved of the design of the proposed pedestrian refuge because it did not have kerb build outs which would benefit cyclists.

RESOLVED to install a new pedestrian refuge on Ketts Hill, together with extensions to the existing double yellow line, as shown on plan no 10?HD/048/02 contained in appendix 1 of the report.

7. PROPOSED POLICY ON PROVIDING ACCESSES TO THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY FROM PRIVATE LAND

During discussion members welcomed the report and considered that a policy that covered all eventualities would be helpful. The head of transportation explained that the policy should be considered in the context of the county council's policy. It highlighted the issues that arose on the streets of terraced houses in the city and would enable the council to protect on-street parking provision and visual amenity.

Councillor Bremner pointed out that dropped kerbs, because of the slopes on the pavement, caused problems for people using wheelchairs or buggies.

RESOLVED to adopt the policy as detailed in the body of the report for the assessment of requests for the provision of accesses onto the public highway.

8. BLUE BADGE CAR PARK CHARGES

Councillors Shaw and Altman spoke against the proposal to increase car park charges for Blue Badge holders and in favour of option 2, to reintroduce the previous concession of free unlimited parking for Blue Badge holders in the council's car parks.

Councillor Plant said that he had no objections to the charges and that Great Yarmouth Borough Council had similar charges for its drivers who were disabled.

He considered that there should only be an additional free hour rather than allowing for a free hour for every hour paid for.

Councillor Bremner pointed out that blue badge holders had always had to pay for parking in the multi-storey car parks. Payment was not an issue raised by groups representing blue badge holders during consultation: it was more about being treated equally. Option 3 recognised that blue badge holders could take longer to get around the city.

The head of transportation explained the rationale for the proposed schedule of fees in that it was recognised that getting out of and into a car took longer for disabled people as did getting around the city during their visit.

RESOLVED that the committee supports the provision of free additional time for blue badge holders as set out in Option 3 of the report to take effect from 28 March 2011.

9. NORWICH PARK AND RIDE FARE CHARGES

The assistant director travel and transport, Norfolk County Council, introduced the report and answered questions.

RESOLVED to approve:

- (1) the amendment of the charges for parking at the Airport Park and Ride site, as detailed in appendix 1;
- (2) make all the necessary changes to the wording of the Norwich City Council (Norwich Airport Park and Ride) Traffic Regulation Order 2003;
- (3) request the Norwich City Council to advertise and introduce these changes to the Norwich City Council (Norwich Airport Park and Ride) Traffic Regulation Order 2003 in accordance with Sections 32 and 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

10. ON STREET ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

The head of transportation presented the report and explained that the severe weather in December 2010 had affected income levels. This would be reported in the December figures in due course. In response to a question, he explained that road works in St Giles had a major effect on income generation in pay and display bays. Utility companies had a legal right to obtain access to equipment and the council could not charge for road closures.

RESOLVED, having received the report, to note that:

- (1) income and issuing of penalty charge notices have continued at last year's level;
- (2) permit income is up on the budgeted figure for the year;

- (3) there was major routine expenditure for machine and handheld maintenance in December and January.

11. HIGHWAY PERFORMANCE MONITORING OF THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY AGREEMENT

RESOLVED having considered the report to receive and note the available performance results.

12. MAJOR ROAD WORKS – REGULAR MONITORING

RESOLVED having considered the report to note its contents.

CHAIR