

Report to	Norwich highways agency committee 27 September 2012	Item 10
Report of	Director of Planning, Environment & Transport and Head of city development services	
Subject	Transport for Norwich – St Stephens Street and Surrey Street removal of general traffic	

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the proposals, to remove general traffic from St Stephens Street and from Surrey Street between All Saints Green and St Stephens Street that are funded by the Better Bus Area Bid and seek permission to consult on those proposals.

Recommendation

To ask the Head of city development services to carry out the necessary statutory procedures associated with securing the traffic regulation orders relating to the access restrictions and changes to waiting and loading restrictions listed below and shown on plan to be displayed at meeting. An indicative plan has been included in this report for reference.

- Allow only buses, hackney carriages, private hire vehicles, commercial vehicles & pedal cycles to enter St Stephens Street from it's junction with Chapelfield Road
- Allow only buses, hackney carriages, private hire vehicles, commercial vehicles, vehicles accessing off street parking facilities & pedal cycles to enter Surrey Street from it's junction with All Saints Green
- Change the existing disabled parking bay on the northwest side of St Stephens Street to a bay to be used exclusively by demand responsive transport (DRT) vehicles for pick-up and drop-off, remove the disabled parking bay on Surrey Street and investigate alternate disabled parking provision in the city centre.
- Review the use of the loading bay on Surrey Street
- Relocate disabled parking spaces

To ask the Head of city development to carry out consultation with the public and key stakeholders on these proposals and report back to a future meeting

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priorities to make Norwich a prosperous city and to make Norwich a safe and clean city and the service plan priority of delivering the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) and to offer sustainable transport options

Financial implications

£330k is available from the Department for Transport funded Better Bus Area Bid to finance this project.

Ward / Division: Mancroft

Cabinet member: Councillor Bremner (city) – Environment and development
Cllr Plant (county) – Planning and transportation

Contact officers

Joanne Deverick – Transportation & Network Manager (City)	01603
joannedeverick@norwich.gov.uk	212461
Jon Barnard – Cit Agency and NATS manager (county)	07909
Jon.barnard@norfolk.gov.uk	895214

Background documents

Report

Background

1. In July 2012 NHAC members received a report detailing the Better Bus Area Bid funding that the Department for Transport (DfT) awarded to Norfolk County Council. One of the projects included in the bid was the removal of general traffic from St Stephens Street and the northern end of Surrey Street¹, between All Saints Green and St Stephens Street
2. The removal of general traffic from St Stephens Street and Surrey Street, which will see significant benefits for bus passengers, pedestrians and air quality within the heart of the shopping area, has been a long term objective of both the city and county councils; it is significant part of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) and was one of the city centre measures approved in principle following the consultation in 2010 on the NATS implementation plan. It is also fundamental to the delivery of the St Stephens area masterplan.
3. The major bus operators serving Norwich were consulted during the preparation of the Better Bus Area Bid and they all agreed that this was the one single scheme that would have the biggest impact on improving bus reliability in the city.

The problems to be addressed

4. The plan attached as appendix one shows the current layout of St Stephens and Surrey Street.
5. St Stephens Street, has historically been the one of busiest street in the city for buses, with more services starting and terminating in the street than any other except Castle Meadow. It is used by over 4.2 million bus passengers a year, around 13,500 on an average day. It's location in the heart of the shopping area is well liked by bus passengers. The long term aim of the St Stephens masterplan is to open up a direct pedestrian route between St Stephens Street and the bus station, but this relies on redevelopment of private land and is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future.
6. St Stephens Street is a busy street with very well used pedestrian crossings. The kerb side space is limited and the bus stop stands are operating at, or close to, capacity. If a bus is early in arriving or late in leaving a stand, problems occur as there is little margin in the timetabling for buses entering and leaving stands. Frequently buses are prevented from moving off the stands due to vehicles waiting to allow pedestrians to cross and due to general congestion in the street.
7. Traffic counts show that nearly 5000 vehicles a day use St Stephens Street. Of these 1500 (30%) are buses. The remainder are delivery vehicles, taxis, cycles, motor cycles and private cars. The estimated number of cars using St Stephens as a through route is 3000.
8. The majority of the private vehicles are travelling northeast bound from the Queens Road / Chapelfield junction towards Red Lion Street. It is thought that these drivers are either trying to access the Castle Mall car parks, with some travelling through the

¹ For ease of reference this will be referred to simply as Surrey Street in the remainder of the report

city centre towards the railway station or Tombland. Southwest bound cars can only enter St Stephens Street from Surrey Street, and it is thought that other than some drivers who are trying to avoid the Queens Road / All Saints Green traffic signals, most will have had a reason for being in Surrey Street.

The proposed scheme

9. For St Stephens Street it is suggested that only buses, coaches, demand responsive vehicles, taxis (both Hackneys and Private Hire vehicles with the roof bar / sign), commercial delivery vehicles and pedal cycles are allowed to enter the street from the inner ring road roundabout. No private vehicles (cars or vans) or motorcycles will be allowed to enter St Stephens Street.
10. At the current time the only opportunity for private vehicles to stop anywhere along the street is in the 3 disabled bays outside Lakeland. In order for the scheme to work and the enforcement to be effective these bays will need to be relocated elsewhere in the city centre.
11. On Surrey Street it will not be possible to restrict all private vehicles as there are a number of private car parks accessed from it. Here it is suggested that only buses, coaches, demand responsive vehicles, taxis, commercial delivery vehicles, pedal cycles and private vehicles accessing off street facilities in the street be allowed to enter Surrey Street at the All Saints Green / Surrey Street signalled junction.
12. In Surrey Street there are 4 disabled parking spaces. As well as introducing extra traffic to the street they are also the cause of a pinch point, meaning 2 buses cannot pass each other. For these reasons it is suggested that they are relocated.
13. With regard to the loading bay, as a small number of the properties at the St Stephens end of Surrey Street do not have access to off street loading it is not possible to prevent loading at all times in the street. However, it would be possible to stop all loading at all times on the yellow lines and have a loading bay that only operated outside of peak hours.
14. The exact nature of how the restrictions would look on the ground is yet to be determined, however it is likely that the access restrictions will be implemented using signs, carriageway markings and surfacing. In the future there may be potential for camera enforcement at the entry points.
15. The plan attached as appendix 2 details the changes that will be required.

Displaced traffic

16. Private vehicles that currently use St Stephens Street are likely to divert along Queens Road to All Saints Green and then travel down Westlegate to rejoin Red Lion Street. Traffic modelling suggests that this will add a further 800 vehicles to Westlegate over an average day, an increase of 21%. In terms of stimulating regeneration of the buildings in the street it will be seen by developers as a retrograde step and is likely to put back any redevelopment plans for many years.
17. At this committee in May 2011 a scheme was approved for consultation that would make Chapelfield North two way for buses, coaches, taxis, delivery vehicles and local access traffic. One of the traffic management measures needed to enable that scheme to work was to introduce a right turn only from Westlegate into Red Lion

Street, this measure combined with the proposals to remove general traffic from St Stephens Street will reduce the volume of traffic substantially in Westlegate from 5400 to 2600.

18. The Chapelfield North scheme was not progressed due as funding that was anticipated through the Department for Transport's for Local Strategic Transport Fund allocation was not forthcoming. Those problems have now been overcome (see separate report on the agenda) and it is therefore proposed to run both projects together. This will significantly reduce the effects of the displaced traffic that would have previously used Stephens Street, and together the two schemes will see considerable benefits for buses in the city centre.
19. For Surrey Street the volume of displaced traffic will be approximately 400 vehicles per day and this can be accommodated within the existing road network.

Disabled parking spaces

20. As it is proposed that the disabled parking spaces will be removed from the both St Stephens Street and Surrey Street, replacement spaces locations will be investigated.

Demand responsive transport

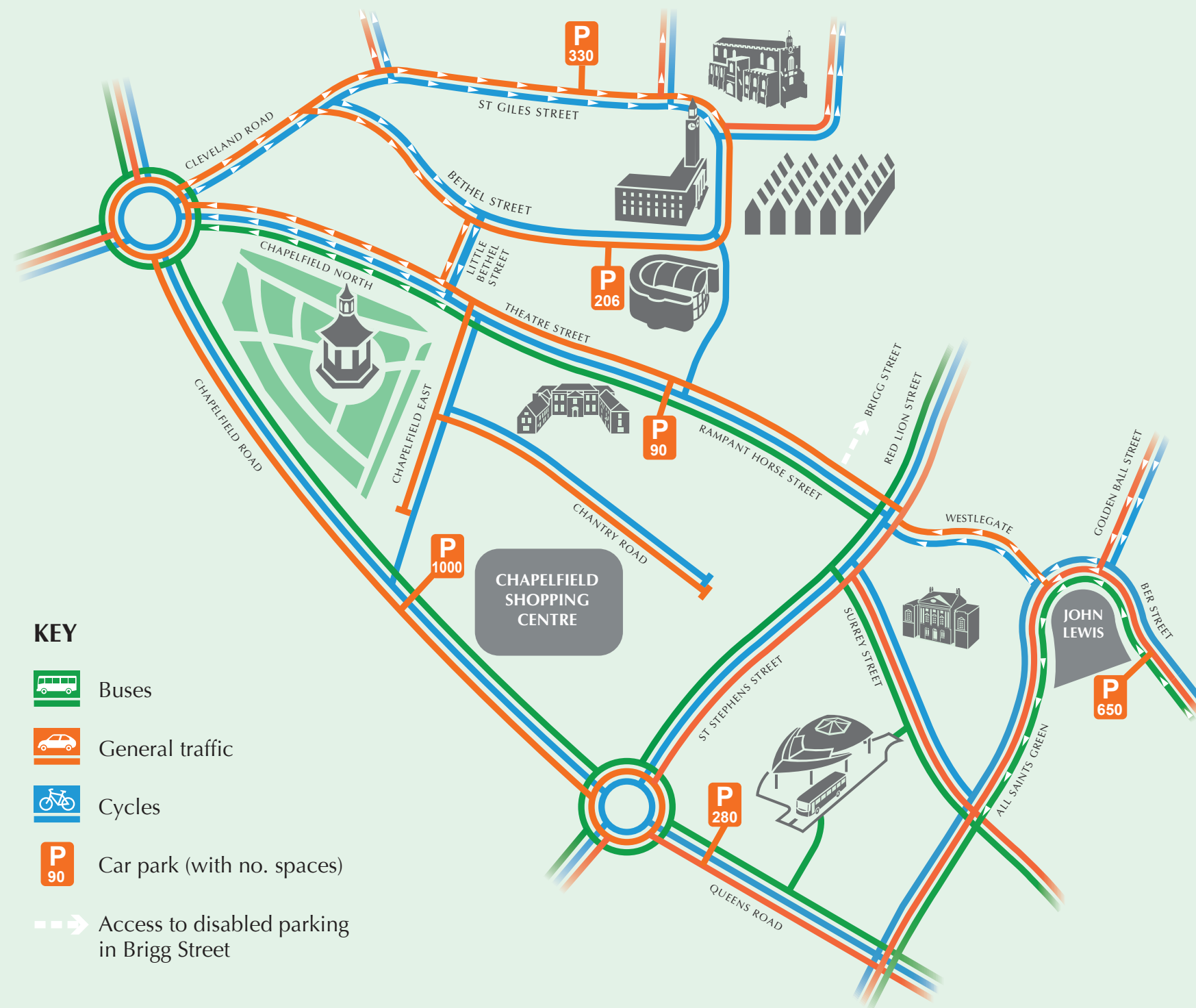
21. The removal of the disabled parking bay on St Stephens Street gives the opportunity to provide drop off / pick up point for demand responsive transport, as proposed in the report on this agenda about bus and coach layover spaces and stops. Demand responsive transport includes community transport providers such as Dial a Ride services and the most recent NATS consultation highlighted the lack of facilities in the city centre for such operators.

Car Park direction signing

22. Currently St Stephens Street is signed as the route for traffic from the A11 Newmarket Road and A140 Ipswich Road for Castle Mall car park. All signing, both traditional and the variable message signing showing the number of spaces available will need to be updated.

Consultation & Implementation

23. It is proposed that there should be a joint consultation for the St Stephens Street/Surrey Street and the Chapelfield North scheme, and that future reports on the 2 schemes should be taken jointly.
24. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, implementation of both schemes could start in summer 2013 and be completed by March 2014.



Current

© Crown Copyright and database right 2012
Ordnance Survey 100019747

