



## MINUTES

### NORWICH HIGHWAYS AGENCY COMMITTEE

10am to 11.55am

21 March 2013

Present:

**County Councillors:**

Adams (chair) (V)  
Plant)(V)  
Bearman  
Scutter

**City Councillors:**

Bremner (vice-chair)  
Harris (V)  
Carlo  
Grahame  
Stonard

\*(V) voting member

Apologies: County Councillor Shaw (other council business)

#### 1. COUNCILLOR SCUTTER

The chair referred to the county council elections which would be held in May and pointed out that this could be the last meeting for some of the county councillors. Councillor Scutter was not seeking re-election and therefore it was an opportunity to thank him for his valuable contribution to the committee.

**RESOLVED** to record the committee's appreciation of the contribution made by Councillor Scutter to the work of the committee.

#### 2. GRAPES HILL BUS LANE – LEGAL CHALLENGE

The chair read out the following statement:

"Norfolk County Council can confirm that it has received notice of legal challenge to the Grapes Hill Bus Lane proposal. The county council is confident that the procedure it followed in bringing forward this scheme was entirely in accordance with legal requirements. Nevertheless, citizens have the right to ask courts to carry out a judicial review of these procedures. In light of this, we have pushed the scheme start date back."

#### 3. PETITION

The chair agreed that the petition regarding Chapel Field North that had been received could be taken under the agenda item 7, below, Transport for Norwich, St Stephens Street and Chapel Field North.

#### **4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The chair said that two public questions had been received regarding Chapel Field North and agreed that these could be taken under the agenda item 7, below, Transport for Norwich, St Stephens Street and Chapel Field North.

##### **Onley Street, street gullies**

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

“Following the largely successful deep cleaning of streets in the Unthank Road area last November, street gullies in Onley Street and two pavement drains in Gloucester Street are still waiting to be unblocked. The latter has been the subject of enquiries from myself since June 2012 and from one resident for much longer and represents a flooding risk to the properties concerned. Please could an imminent date be given for this work to take place?”

The head of city development services, Norwich City Council, replied on behalf of the committee as follows:

“Whilst many gullies were cleaned in the area around Unthank Road and Earlham Road last autumn, those in Onley Street were not. It took far longer to clean the gullies in some of the other streets than anticipated as they were in a worse state than thought; many needed digging out and the pipe work jetting. That has informed assumed output levels for future gully cleaning in such streets.

Staff from the city council’s highways and citywide services teams are liaising with regard to a more extensive programme of deep cleaning this year although no date has been fixed for Onley Street yet. I acknowledge the concern raised and will ensure that is reflected in the programme. However, I am not currently aware of any flooding problem in Onley Street which would warrant urgent cleaning to be carried out.

I note the time taken to sort the footway gullies near 45-47 Gloucester Street. These were reported last June and added to our list to be cleared. Whilst the road gullies in Gloucester Street were cleaned last autumn, these particular footway ones weren’t as the covers could not be lifted. An order was subsequently placed for replacement gullies but the work has had to be postponed along with others due to budget constraints (caused by high winter maintenance costs). The work will be carried out soon in the new financial year, probably mid-spring, but I am not able to give an exact date at the moment. As far as we are aware, the footway levels mean there is no risk of internal flooding.

We now ask that if people feel that a gully needs to be cleaned sooner than would be the case of waiting for the routine clean, that they send us a photo of flooding to help us prioritise work.”

Councillor Little commented that the pavements in Gloucester Street sloped towards the houses and there was a risk of flooding from blocked drains. However, he was disappointed that because of an operational problem the work had not carried out at the time and that he had not received a response to his enquiries about this matter.

## **5. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Harris declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7, below, Transport for Norwich, St Stephens Street and Chapel Field North because she worked in St Stephens Street.

Councillor Carlo declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7, Transport for Norwich, St Stephens Street and Chapel Field North as a member of the Norwich and Norfolk Transport Action Group.

## **6. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2013.

## **7. TRANSPORT FOR NORWICH : ST STEPHENS STREET AND CHAPEL FIELD NORTH**

(Councillors Harris and Carlo had declared non-pecuniary interests in this item.)

(Copies of a response to the consultation from Public Health Norfolk and Waveney were circulated at the meeting and would be available on the council's website.)

Mrs Hazel Harrison, Chapel Field North, asked the following question, on behalf of the Chapelfield Action Group:

"Would the officers please tell us how deliveries and collections to Pedro's Restaurant are to be made if the entrance to the Chapelfield Gardens on Chapel Field North, by the bus stop, is closed, given that some large vehicles like the Biffa refuse trucks, Funnybones, BOC gas, beer and soft drinks trucks, cooking oil deliveries and removal, laundry service trucks, along with PB George Meats, vegetable deliveries, drain clearance vans, etc., without allowing them to enter these historic gardens, much used by families, and drive along the pedestrian pathways, some of which run past the nursery and play areas, as roads? "

The principal planner (transportation), Norwich City Council, replied on behalf of the committee:

"This question highlights a concern about vehicles within the gardens that is already an issue. All the current concessions, and the various contractors that work there, routinely bring vehicles into the gardens and drive them along the various pathways. This is as an issue irrespective of the proposed works on Chapel Field North, but obviously the current proposals have added some

urgency, and the council's team that manage the parks and open spaces agree that this much wider issue needs to be addressed.

This issue involves a number of third parties, and it would be inappropriate to discuss their affairs, and contractual arrangement in this arena. There are, however, other loading bays on Chapel Field North and Chapel Field East that are available for anyone to use."

In response to Mrs Harrison's supplementary question, the principal planner (transportation) said that the loading bays would be outside The Garage.

Mr Agombar, Sightseeing Tour of Olde Norwich, asked the following question:

"There are approximately 1,000 coach, minibus and bus drivers who drive in the centre of Norwich. I am certain that they are all very pleased to see St Stephens and other roads being made into bus, taxi and cycles only.

However they like me are very cynical that it will be no different to Castle Meadow or the other 20 streets in Norwich where restrictions apply to general traffic which are being deliberately disobeyed or ignored. As soon as words "access only" or "loading only" many drivers in the city think it applies to them.

The question is when the committee approves this scheme, how is it going to be enforced? Why do only four members of the committee have a vote and why does a police traffic officer not attend the meetings? I am being cynical again, but is it because there is no enforcement?"

(Copies of the slides provided by Mr Agombar were displayed at the meeting.)

The transportation and network manager, Norwich City Council, replied on behalf of the committee:

"As Mr Agombar says, the compliance with some traffic restrictions around the city is not as good as it could be. This scheme has been designed to make enforcement as easy as possible. For example in St Stephens and Surrey Street the disabled parking bays were removed and the loading bay on Surrey Street is to be commercial vehicles only. This means that private cars have no reason to be in those streets and vehicles that do not have a genuine need to be there can be easily identified.

Currently the enforcement of traffic restrictions is the responsibility of the police. However the county council are looking to trial the use of camera enforcement at bus gates. The bus gates on Rampant Horse Street, on St Stephens Street as you come off the roundabout and on Surrey Street just north of All Saints Green signalled junction have all been identified as part of that trial, and ideally the camera enforcement will be in place from the day the restrictions are introduced.

The Norwich Highways Agency committee is a body of elected members that decides whether transport improvements in the city are implemented and make their decisions based on the information provided in the reports. As part

of the consultation process the Norfolk Constabulary are consulted on any new scheme and their comments will be recorded in the reports, as they are for this scheme. Changes to the transport system in the city affect many people and organisations in Norwich aside from the police, such as businesses, bus operators, residents, heritage groups and many more. It would be unwieldy to invite them all to the meeting; and therefore members have to rely on the evidence from these bodies given in the reports to committee.

The committee consists of the four voting members, two city and two county members. The other 6 councillors present are there to advise and assist the voting members. This is set out in the Norwich Highways Agency Agreement between the city and county councils.”

The chair then invited speakers who had given notice that they would like to present statements objecting to the proposal to address the committee.

Mrs Elizabeth Wheal, off Bethel Street, made a statement about the potential for councillors’ personal liability in relation to their participation in decisions and the safety issues arising from the proposed recommendations under consideration and asked what risk assessments had been conducted in relation to emergency evacuation of passengers from buses on the westbound lane of Chapel Field North following the removal of the pavement which would then require passengers (including older people, people with disabilities, young people and children in buggies) to cross two way traffic to assemble on the other side of the road. She also asked what access there would be for emergency vehicles in such an emergency circumstance.

Mr Richard Wilson, Chapel Field North, referred to the proposed introduction of two-way traffic in Chapelfield North, and commented on the potential impact of an increase in bus and heavy goods vehicle movements to the heritage assets of Chapel Field North and gardens, and asked if the council had conducted an environmental impact assessment, in accordance with its duties under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 on the effect that the TRO would have on the area. The committee was asked to consider the effect of making a decision which would turn a narrow residential street into “a crawler lane for buses and heavy goods vehicles” for the questionable reduction of two minutes in bus journey times.

Mr Anthony Barnes, off Bethel Street, said that he had not had an opportunity to discuss an alternative proposal, which would improve Westlegate and avoid the introduction of harmful levels of pollution in the Chapel Field North area, with officers at the meeting between local residents and officers held on 8 February 2013, and officers had not contacted him since. This alternative would make Westlegate one way, where at present it was two-way which officers said was necessary to access the Farmers’ Avenue entrance to the car park, and bring forward two-way traffic, as planned, in Rose Lane, Farmers Avenue and Golden Ball Street and expressed interest in how this had been traffic modelled. Other aspects of this alternative scheme would be to reverse the flow of traffic in Chapel Field North and Westlegate; provide an exit for light vehicles only from Chapel Field East into the ring road and implement the proposed changes in Cleveland Road and Bethel Street, including

the closure of Little Bethel Street. This would result in better shopping experience in Westlegate and access to John Lewis, improve safety in Rampant Horse Street, incoming buses could use Chapel Field North and there would be less pollution in Chapel Field North and Chapelfield Gardens.

Mr Peter Jackson, Upper St Giles, confirmed that the Chapel Field Action Group had submitted a legal challenge and said that they were not opposed to the aims of the Norwich area transportation strategy (NATS) but to the way these would be achieved through this scheme. He pointed out that as council tax payers there should be a solution which met the needs of residents, the councils and the wider population. The problem was that the proposed solution to achieve a two minute saving in bus journey times was based on flawed data, which was a year old, and not compliant with Department for Transport (DFT) guidelines. He proposed that there should be more robust and verifiable collection of data, which would increase confidence in the outcome of whether the proposed actions were required or not, based on the use of new technology, such as number plate recognition at junctions to accurately counted vehicle movements and the involvement of local residents and user groups in the process.

The transportation and network manager in response to the speakers referred to the reports. She confirmed that safety audits had been carried out for Chapelfield Gardens and for all the highway implications proposed in the scheme. She confirmed that pedestrian would not be required to walk through the park and that it would be possible to walk around the park as the other pavement would be enhanced. Buses could require evacuation anywhere in the city. and there were no safety concerns for evacuating passengers from a bus in Chapel Field North as the traffic was restricted to 20mph.

The principal planner (transportation) explained that an environmental impact assessment was not required and that the scheme was well below the level that would require one. A screening opinion had also been carried out to ensure that this was the case.

The transportation and network manager explained that there had been a tight time scale between committees for officers to review the data and the residents' alternative proposals. There had been several hours of meetings with residents, including Mr Barnes. Having considered the information, officers, which included landscape architects, traffic engineers and transport planners, and based on their professional opinion, came to the conclusion that there was no alternative to the scheme proposed. It was important that bus journey times were improved to ensure the viability of the city centre. Traffic modelling was regularly updated, most recently with the road census material. The evaluation of the scheme was based on several years of traffic data collection. The bus journey time review had been based on the entire data collected during 2012.

The chair then invited speakers in support of the proposals to address the committee.

Mr David McMaster, Open Top Citysightseeing bus, director of VisitNorwich and Chairman of Norwich Attractions (representing 17 members) introduced the petition signed in support of the scheme and said that it was important to improve coach

access into the city centre. Norwich Attractions and VisitNorwich considered that coach tourism should be encouraged as being preferable to an increase in cars. PR programmes to increase coach tourism in the city would not be successful without a suitable dropping off area and parking facility for coaches. The proposal to make Chapel Field North would allow coaches to access the bays in Theatre Street. At the moment coaches had to come up Theatre Street from Rampant Horse Street and back into Chapelfield East and there were safety concerns for both coaches and pedestrians.

Mr Julian Patterson, Konectbus (bus operator), representing Go Ahead, then spoke in support of the proposals which would improve bus journey times. The bus operators worked in partnership with planners to implement public transport schemes to improve service delivery and address unpredictable delays caused by traffic. It was difficult for operators to achieve a punctual service particularly in the city centre. Buses using Chapel Field North would provide a more reliable bus service and avoid the double roundabouts on the ring road and provide a service for the major development of housing to the west of the city. He pointed out that bus operators would take full advantage of the benefits of the scheme.

Discussion ensued in which members praised the members of the Chapel Field North Action Group for presenting their case in a clear and logical manner. Members confirmed that they had listened to what the group had said and their comments and representations would be considered with the other elements of the scheme. It was noted that there were some residents in the Cow Hill area who welcomed the reduction in the speed limit to 20mph. Members expressed concern that there had been public misconception about the proposals in relation to Chapelfield gardens and that it was damaging to the democratic process. One member said that she had met with people in the park to demonstrate the changes to a short piece of path and had reassured them that there would be no loss of trees or planting. Another member referred to the report and commented that he considered it was a missed opportunity not to use the freight consolidated centre to alleviate the number of delivery vehicles. There was agreement that the removal of the hedge, proposed by Norfolk Constabulary's architectural liaison officer to enable surveillance, was too drastic. It was noted that whilst there was confidence in the data provided by officers, lessons could be learnt in "rounding off" of data in future. A member noted the wider benefits of the scheme which included pedestrian safety in Rampant Horse Street.

During discussion officers responded to the issues raised. The transportation and network manager referred members to the report to the committee on 24 January 2013 regarding Pedro's restaurant and access to the loading bays in Chapel Field East and Chapel Field North. On the issue of reducing emissions from buses, the travel development team manager, Norfolk County Council, said that the minimum standard for buses was Euro 3 and most buses in the city were Euro 4 and above, and officers worked with the bus operators to secure funding to achieve higher standards.

During discussion the chair said that he was opposed to the Chapel Field North element of the scheme on the grounds of the strong opposition from members of the public and in particular the local residents, which would make the scheme difficult to implement, and that it would block off another route to general traffic which would

deter residents from outside the city coming into Norwich for shopping and encourage them to use out of town shopping centres instead. He suggested that a separate vote should be taken on the two schemes. The head of citywide development advised that the two elements of the scheme were interdependent and that based on traffic modelling should not be separated.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) note the results of the scheme specific consultation taking account of the previous widespread Transport for Norwich consultation (adopted in 2010) included in the report to this committee on 24 January 2013.
- (2) note that further consideration has been given to the objections raised by the Chapelfield Action Group, that the disputed data has been verified and that the alternative proposals have been fully assessed.
- (3) approve the plans as follows:
  - (a) unanimously with all 4 members voting in favour, to remove general traffic from St Stephens Street and Surrey Street between All Saints Green and St Stephens Street,
  - (b) with 3 members voting in favour (Councillors Plant, Bremner and Harris) and 1 member voting against (Councillor Adams, for the reasons minuted above) to make Chapel Field North two-way for buses, taxis, cycles, deliveries and access with associated enabling works.

and, therefore, unanimously (with all 4 members voting in favour) to:

- (4) ask the head of city development services to carry out the necessary statutory processes to confirm the following traffic regulation orders:

The Traffic Management Order

- Allow two way traffic movements on Cleveland Road, Bethel Street and Chapel Field North
- Prohibit traffic from using Little Bethel Street while maintaining access for cycles and allowing them to ride in both directions.
- Restrict access to Theatre Street and Rampant Horse Street while retaining access to premises and car parking, and for buses, cycles, and taxis.
- Create an eastbound bus lane in Rampant Horse Street outside Debenhams for use by buses, cycles, taxis and emergency vehicles
- Allow only buses, cycles, taxis and commercial vehicles accessing business premises into St Stephens Street
- Allow only buses, cycles, and taxis in Surrey Street between St Stephens Street and All Saints Green while retaining access to premises and car parking
- require all traffic (except cycles and emergency vehicles) using Westlegate to turn right into Red Lion Street
- Provide a cycle lane in Westlegate

The Controlled Parking Zone Order

- Add new permit parking spaces on Cleveland Road and Bethel Street



- Remove all existing parking and bus stops on Chapel Field North
- Convert the existing loading bay in Surrey Street to an off-peak loading bay for goods vehicles only.
- Replace existing disabled parking spaces on St Stephens Street and Surrey Street with alternative provision on Surrey Street (replacing some double yellow lines and short stay parking spaces) and Theatre Street (replacing a coach parking bay)
- Provide additional 'Pay and Display' short stay parking spaces on Bethel Street and Cleveland Road
- Adjustments to existing waiting and loading restrictions to take account of these changes

#### The Speed Restriction Order

- Introduce a 20mph speed limit on Cleveland Road and Chapel Field North
  - Extend the current 20mph speed limits on St Giles Street and Bethel Street to cover the entire length of both streets
- (5) ask the head of city development services to carry out the necessary statutory processes to change the previously advertised changes to taxi ranks and demand responsive transport stop on St Stephens Street as shown on plan number PL/TR/3329/735
- (6) note that the reconstruction of the footpath on the northern side of Chapel Field North is to be included within the scope of the project.
- (7) agree not to implement the suggestions of the police architectural liaison officer to further increase street lighting in Chapel Field Gardens (beyond the level already proposed) and to remove the hedge adjacent to Chapel Field North.

(There was a short adjournment. The committee then reconvened.)

## **8. NORWICH HIGHWAYS AGENCY AGREEMENT - RENEWAL**

During discussion, Councillor Plant said that part of his remit, as the county council's cabinet member for planning and transportation, would be to engage with officers on the review of the Norwich Highways Agency Agreement. In reply to a question he said that he was satisfied with the current voting arrangements on the committee with each authority having two voting members each and would be opposed to an increase in voting members.

Discussion ensued in which members noted that the management of highways was a county council cabinet function and that the Norwich Highways Agency Agreement and this committee was a unique arrangement in the county.

**RESOLVED** to support that officers review the Agency Agreement, and report proposals back to committee for comment before being considered by the county council's cabinet and the city council's cabinet.

**9. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2013-14**

**RESOLVED** to agree the following schedule of meetings for the civic year 2013-2014, all meetings to be at 10am and held at City Hall:-

23 May 2013  
18 July 2013  
19 September 2013  
28 November 2013  
16 January 2014  
20 March 2014  
22 May 2014

CHAIR