

Report to Norwich highways agency committee
21 January 2016
Report of Head of city development services
Subject Proposed Toucan Crossing on Newmarket Road

Item

7

Purpose

To agree to the installation of a new toucan crossing on Newmarket Road approximately 10m southwest of its junction with Poplar Avenue.

Recommendations

That the committee:

- (1) note the objections, and the level of support for the new crossing;
- (2) agree to the installation of the proposed toucan crossing as shown on Plan No. PH0079-TS-Sketch 15-10-2015 2 in appendix 1 of this report.

Financial consequences

The costs of the scheme are being met from spending approved from the Local Growth Fund, with an anticipated cost of £200,000.

Corporate objective / Service plan priority

The scheme helps to meet the corporate priority for a safe, clean city and low carbon city and the service plan priority to implement the Local Transport Plan.

Wards: Eaton

Cabinet member: Cllr Bremner – Environment and sustainable development

Contact Officers

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Background documents

None

Policy Background

1. Norwich and its surrounding area is becoming an increasingly popular area to live, work and visit. It is the number one shopping destination in the Eastern Region and becoming one of the nation's premier cultural centres. To ensure the Greater Norwich area continues to be popular and grow, the transport systems need to be able to cope with the increased demand.
2. Norwich is a medieval city with a narrow road system; incorporating a 21st century transport system to cope with the increased demand, without sacrificing highway space for a particular transport mode or at the expense of green space and historic buildings, is challenging.
3. The Norwich area transportation strategy (NATS), now more widely known as Transport for Norwich (TfN), is the adopted strategy which will deliver the transport improvements needed over the next 15 plus years. The strategy recognises everybody's journeys are different and does not look to force people to use one particular mode. It does look to give people viable options on how they choose to travel and actively promote sustainable transport. To do this in some areas of the network, there needs to be a re-balance of the highway space available.
4. The strategy details the plan for future delivery of improvements in order to develop sustainable transport, reduce congestion and improve air quality within the Greater Norwich area. The strategy has already delivered key improvements such as the award winning Norwich Bus Station, St Augustine's Gyratory, a network of Park & Ride facilities, St Stephens and Chapel Field North and various bus rapid transit (BRT) improvements. It also includes the recently completed Postwick hub and the Northern Distributor Road which are due for completion in late 2017.
5. The implementation plan for the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATSIP) was agreed by Norfolk County Council in April 2010 and updated in November 2013 ([see link for updated implementation plan](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/view/NCC158241) <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/view/NCC158241>) The plan sets out the range of transport measures, together with their general intended phasing, for delivery over the short to medium term. The plan has now been updated to take account of what has been delivered since 2010, and to reflect the latest position on future scheme delivery, given progress with implementation, and now that the growth plans for the area are more clear ([see joint core strategy document: http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/dmsdocument/1953](http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/dmsdocument/1953)).
6. Cycling is on the increase for both recreation and commuting nationally and the area has a thriving cycling community. The implementation of a citywide cycling network (see link to cycle map <http://www.norwich.gov.uk/TransportAndStreets/Transport/Cycling/Documents/CyclingMapFront.pdf>) is a key part of the Transport for Norwich strategy as the delivery of a comprehensive city network reduces a number of short distance car journeys removing pressure on the network,

as well as offering improving quality of life and the health benefits that have been well documented.

7. The Greater Norwich area is one of eight urban areas across the country that has been successful in bidding for Cycle Ambition funding from the Department for Transport to comprehensively improve the quality of cycling infrastructure across the Norwich cycle network a copy of the application documents can be found here <http://www.norwich.gov.uk/TransportAndStreets/Transport/Cycling/Pages/CycleCityAmbitionGrant2015.aspx>. This scheme is a key part of the blue pedalway.

Introduction

8. The A11 Newmarket Road corridor is one of the main arterial routes into Norwich City from the South of the County. As such it has been designated a bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor. There has been a large increase in the number of both cyclists and pedestrians in the area due to an increase in development in Cringleford and Eaton. With future development on Bluebell Road and the implementation of a cycle network there will be increased demand for crossings on this busy corridor.
9. The current situation is that pedestrians and cyclists are using a pedestrian refuge. As part of the growth point funded bus lane improvement in 2009, many requests were received for a toucan crossing at this location, but this was unaffordable within the budget at the time. The funding for the project has now been made available from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
10. A re-profile of funding from another large city project has resulted in this project being accelerated to ensure total budget for 2015-16 is spent. Consequently, this crossing is being proposed as a stand-alone project, in advance of any other proposals along this corridor.

The proposals

11. The existing pedestrian refuge is situated a few metres north east of the junction with Poplar Avenue, but it is not practicable to site a toucan in this location due to the existence of a number of private driveways. Therefore the location of the toucan has been moved to the immediate south of the Poplar Avenue junction.
12. The new toucan crossing will significantly strengthen cycle and pedestrian access at a location with significant levels of demand for people to cross the road. As a traffic light controlled facility, the crossing will not have any significant impact on the capacity of the Newmarket Road for motor vehicles
13. Extension of the existing 30mph speed limit further out of the city was considered prior to the advertising of the toucan crossing in discussion

with the Network analysis and safety team. However, it was concluded that this was not necessary because the proposed toucan crossing is located within the existing 30mph speed limit which is considered appropriate and safe.

Consultation responses

14. Members are already aware that there has been a long standing desire, both by members of the public, and local councillors, to replace the existing refuge with a traffic light controlled facility. This desire has been further demonstrated by the recent consultation with residents and businesses in Eaton and Cringleford in which 12 respondents suggested the need for a pedestrian crossing here.
15. On 25 November 2015, the proposal was advertised by statutory notice in the press and on site; and immediate neighbours were advised by letter. In direct response to the statutory notice four responses were received. These are detailed in Appendix 2

Implementation

16. It is intended that if these proposals are agreed work to implement the new toucan crossing will start in Spring 2016.

Appendix 1 Location of proposed Toucan Crossing



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2015 Ordnance Survey
100019346

Northfolk County Council
at your service

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DRAWING TITLE

NO.	ISSUED BY	ISSUED DATE

APPROVED BY	DATE	PROJECT NO.

Appendix 2
Responses to Statutory Notice

Comment	Officer response
<p>In agreement with the provision of a Toucan Crossing at this end of Newmarket Road.</p> <p>Concerned about the proposed position. It would be too close to the slip road which comes from Bluebell Road and the presence of the bus lane in that area. To be confronted so quickly with a Toucan red light would be a cause of a potential accident.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crossing should be re-positioned to the City side of Unthank Road.• Consider moving the 50 mph sign further out towards Cringleford or the installation of a speed camera to help slow the traffic in this area.	<p>Agreement with principal noted</p> <p>See paragraphs 4 and 6 of the report</p>
<p>There is a pedestrian crossing approximately 700m into Norwich, near the Sunningdale junction, and 200m further out of Norwich is Bluebell Road with pavements for people to walk along, and cross under the bridge.</p> <p>The Newmarket Road is a main artery out of the city for traffic, and is congested at rush hour. Any further traffic lights are just going to make the congestion worse.</p> <p>In a time of restricted budgets, it does not seem like a very good use of public money.</p>	<p>See paragraphs 2,3 and 5 of the report</p>

Appendix 2
Responses to Statutory Notice

Comment	Officer response
<p>Pleased to see a crossing at this end of Newmarket Road pretty well anywhere, as crossing the road to catch a bus can be a hazardous exercise.</p> <p>Thinks that a crossing to the north East of the junction with Unthank Road - to link the bus stops would be better. Crossing at the end of the dualling is asking a lot of motorists and buses to stop immediately denying them the chance to turn left into Unthank Road before the crossing stops them.</p> <p>Suggests a mini roundabout at the Unthank Road junction - despite the prohibition, cars do turn right onto Newmarket Road from Unthank Road, and some cars make a U-turn at the end of the dualling to go down Eaton Hill</p>	<p>Support for crossing noted. This location has been identified as one with a significant desire line for multiple users. The Unthank Road junction is beyond the scope of this project</p>
<p>Crossing is in the wrong place for most residents from Newmarket Road, Unthank Road or Elveden Close wishing to access the bus-stops on the opposite side. Cannot make out the arrangements for those waiting for the green man on the east side, where the ways for pedestrians and cycles are at present divided. If they are to wait on the cycle path, then they will be blocking the way for the cyclists who are intending to go straight on in either direction, and who will not take kindly to stopping. I see in the centre of the crossing what looks like an elongated refuge. Does this mean that the crossing operates in two halves? Two Toucan Crossings. Have you considered the possible crush on the middle refuge?</p>	<p>See paragraphs 4,5 and 6 of the report</p>