



NORWICH HIGHWAYS AGENCY COMMITTEE

10.00 a.m. – 11.40 a.m.

27 May 2010

Present:

County Councillors:

Adams (Chair) (V)

Gunson) (V)

Bearman

Scutter

Wells

City Councillors:

Bremner (V)

Little (S) (V)

George

Lubbock

*(V) – Voting Member

Apologies:

City Councillors Morrey (Vice-Chair) and Read (substitute, Councillor Little) and County Councillor Shaw (substitute, Councillor Wells)

1. MINUTES

Item 4 - Waiting Restrictions Requests for Implementation in 2009/10

The Transportation Manager, Norwich City Council, said that there had been two representations from businesses requesting that the waiting restrictions approved for Sussex Street were not implemented. The proposals had been instigated in response to residents. Results of the consultation supported this request and showed would be sufficient parking spaces available for commercial traders in Sussex Street. Members considered that the waiting restrictions should be implemented and monitored to assess the impact of the restrictions. The Transportation Manager undertook to notify the correspondents accordingly.

(Copies of the email correspondence from the two businesses in Sussex Street were circulated at the meeting.)

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2010, subject to noting that Councillor Scutter was not present and deleting his name from the list of those present.

2. SPEED MANAGEMENT IN NORWICH

(Due to a printing error on the agenda part of paragraph 26 of the report was missing. Full copies of the report were made available in advance of the meeting. The complete paragraph 26 of the report should read as follows:-

‘26. This option would allow a comprehensive study of speed management for the whole of the City. Judgement can be made on various ways of managing speed on the different types of road class along with traffic volumes, modes of transport and local environment. There will be residential roads that are suitable for 20mph limits and possibly some 20mph zones with minimal traffic calming measures. On class A, B and C roads the speed management strategy would possibly include traffic management such as signs and road markings with an emphasis on provision for pedestrians and cyclists.’)

The Transportation Manager presented the report and said that officers were unable to make a firm recommendation on the proposal. The pilot schemes had shown only an average speed reduction of 1mph and targeting main roads was better value for money in terms of personal injury reduction. The provision of dedicated facilities for cyclists and pedestrians would promote cycling and walking more than a blanket 20mph scheme for all residential areas. The total cost of £550,000 was half the annual budget and it was unlikely that any more funding would be available.

Discussion ensued in which Councillors Lubbock, Bearman and Little expressed their support for the scheme which was considered to be a cultural change that would be beneficial to residents and encourage cyclists and pedestrians. The pilot scheme could not be expected to achieve the results of a wider scheme. A survey conducted by the City and County Councils, NHS Norfolk and partners showed that residents wanted the reduction in speed limits. This was also supported by the Department of Transport's guidelines, Living Streets and the implementation of schemes by other authorities such as Portsmouth and Oxford. Councillor Lubbock suggested that the scheme was implemented on a phased basis which would leave funding available for other schemes.

Councillor Wells said that he considered there were schemes in his division that could benefit more from funding than reducing speed limits 20mph in residential areas. Councillor Gunson said that speed reduction in residential areas should be targeted to roads used as cut-throughs. He pointed out that the budget was likely to be reduced in the next 3 years and that the introduction of a 20mph speed limit in residential areas would take funding from other priorities such as public transport, pedestrian crossings and cycle and footways.

Councillor Bremner said that he considered that the pilot areas had been successful and that the signage effective.

In response to members' questions, the Transportation Manager said that 20mph zones where physical traffic calming measures had been introduced were successful at calming traffic but did not prevent all accidents. The additional cost of the proposal for introducing 20mph speed limits in residential areas was because of the additional cost of the requirement of the new contractors to put traffic management in place when erecting signs. The survey showed that 67% of residents agreed with a speed reduction of 20 mph in residential areas but only 33% of people said that they would take notice of this limit. It would therefore be more beneficial to introduce physical measures to calm traffic in areas of the most need rather than to implement the proposed scheme across the city. The proposal to phase implementation over 5 years would incur additional costs, such as legal fees, and could be around

£150,000 to £170,000 a year. Members were also advised that revenue costs should be taken into account as well. The posters used to support the 20mph pilot projects were not DoT signs and had to be moved every 6 months at a cost of £2,000 per time.

The Chair in summing up said that the budget was likely to be severely cut by as much as by 30-40% and that if this proposal went ahead this would mean that less funding was available for schemes already approved and in the programme. Option 3 would be the best option giving an opportunity for members to have a better idea of funding.

Councillor Little moved and Councillor Bearman seconded that the scheme to introduce the rollout of 20mph in residential areas of Norwich be implemented over a period of 5 years and it was:-

RESOLVED, with 2 members voting in favour (Councillors Bremner and Little) and 2 members voting against (Councillors Adams and Gunson), the amendment was lost on the Chair's casting vote and it was agreed not to implement the rollout of 20mph in residential areas over a period of 5 years.

Discussion ensued on the options and it was considered that a report on option 3 to the November meeting would be informed by the budget position. Councillor Bearman asked that detailed cost of the cost of implementation of the 20mph roll-out be available in the report.

RESOLVED, with 3 members voting in favour (Councillors Adams, Gunson and Bremner) and 1 member abstaining (Councillor Little), to request the Head of Transportation to report to the November meeting of the committee with recommendations on a revised policy for speed management on all classes of road in Norwich (as set out in option 3, paragraphs 26 and 27 of the report.)

3. RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA (UEA) AREA AND EATON/EARLHAM PARK CAR PARKS CONSULTATION

(Councillor Wells declared a personal interest in this item he is undertaking post-graduate studies at the UEA.)

(The Chair had agreed to take the following public question under this item because it related to the subject.)

Tom Sutton, Welfare Officer/Community and Student Rights Officer Union of UEA Students asked the following question:-

“Approximately one third of students at the University of East Anglia need to commute from outside of Norwich. A vast number of these students come from rural areas where public transport is both expensive and inadequate and where driving is the only real means of commuting.

The current parking provision for these students on the UEA campus is also inadequate. The additional travelling time between the site allocated for

student parking and the UEA campus has caused problems for students with work commitments and students with caring responsibilities. Some students fear for their own personal safety by making the trip between the campus and the allocated parking site, and there are reports that the student parking site has reached full capacity with no alternative place park.

If the recommendations in the report for agenda item 7 are accepted, with the likelihood students will still face these issues or similar in a review of the University's travel plan later this year, is it likely that permitting the area will only displace the problem?"

The Transportation Manager said that there had been a lot of work with the UEA on its travel plan and that it was proposed that mini-buses provided a shuttle service between the UEA and Costessey park and ride. This had also been discussed at the Passenger Transport Group. There could be displacement parking raised by this controlled parking zone (CPZ).

In introducing the report, the Transportation Manager suggested that the recommendations be amended to take account of the fact that the City Council's Executive needed to approve changes to the operating hours of its car park at Eaton Park and that to avoid limiting car parking at a bank holiday and half term to amend recommendation (3) by deleting '1 June' and replace with the 'last Friday before the late May Bank Holiday'.

Discussion ensued in which members acknowledged the problems of parking at the UEA. Councillor Bremner considered that the CPZ a positive move that would benefit residents. Councillor Wells said that the costs of parking would put pressure on families in the area on low incomes and considered that the UEA should provide more parking on the campus. Councillor Gunson said that he considered the measures palliative and would put more pressure on other residents. Councillor Lubbock pointed out that residents in South Park Avenue supported the proposals. She said that the UEA should consider expanding into the city where there were sustainable transport links instead of further development and parking on the campus.

The Transportation Manager said that there would be a further report on ongoing revenue costs to the committee's meeting in July.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) ask the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Transportation to carry out the necessary statutory processes to consult on a proposed extension of the WE Controlled Parking Zone as detailed on Plan No. PL/TR/3584/424 and shown in Appendix 1;
- (2) ask the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Transportation to carry out the necessary statutory processes to consult on proposed grass verge waiting restriction outside No. 22 Wilberforce Road;

- (3) subject to the approval of the City Council's Executive at its meeting on 23 June 2010, ask the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Transportation to carry out the necessary statutory processes to consult on proposed changes to off street parking restrictions for Eaton park car park of limited waiting of 2.5 hours, 9am till 3pm, Monday to Friday, third Monday in September to the last Friday before the late May Bank Holiday and investigate automatic number plate enforcement for both Earlham and Eaton Park car parks;
- (4) ask the Head of Transportation report back to this committee any objections arising from this formal consultation.

4. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2006/07 AND 2007/08

During discussion Councillor Scutter referred to the number of errors in these accounts and said that rather than officers from both councils preparing the joint committee's accounts it would be better placed under one council. He suggested that the committee received an update on the outcomes of the Audit Commission's action plan in respect of the accounts for 2007/08 and 2008/09. Councillor Little, as Chair of the City Council's Audit Committee, acknowledged that the problems with the committee's accounts for 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09 were 'symptomatic' of the City Council's performance in its accounting practice at the time but since then there had been a steady improvement and the issues were being addressed. Councillor Gunson expressed concern about the cost of the Audit Commission's fee for the audit for these accounts and whether issues would affect the 2009/2010 accounts. Members also discussed who should be responsible for the payment of the fees and whether the City Council rather than the County Council should prepare the accounts.

The Head of Corporate Accounting and Exchequer Services responded to the issues raised by members as follows:-

- When preparing the 2006/2007 accounts the accounting approach for capital had been agreed with the County's external audit team. The City Council's external audit team, following clarification with the Audit Commission's technical advisory team, determined that capital expenditure should pass through the committee's accounts and this explained the significant audit adjustments. Information on capital had been included in the draft 2006/07 accounts but this was now presented in a different format.
- He concurred with Councillor Little and said that there had been steady improvement in accounting practices at the City Council and that the value for money had improved.
- Following receipt of the Audit Commission's report, which had been received in April, many of the issues in the action plan, where possible, had already been addressed in the preparation of the accounts for 2009/10.
- As 2006/07 was the first year that the committee has had to produce statutory accounts, the Audit Commission had to audit the accounts for 2005/2006 to provide comparative figures for the 2006/2007 accounts and this had meant that the fees for that year were £45,000 and estimated to be £30,000 for the

subsequent 2007/08 and 2008/09 accounts. This level of fees was partly due to the substantive audit approach adopted by the Audit Commission.

- The audit fees had to date been funded by the County Council, although discussions are taking place between the Heads of Finance of the Councils regarding how the additional audit fees, due to the substantive audit approach, would be shared.
- There was no legal requirement for the committee to sign off the 2007/08 and 2008/09 accounts again, incorporating adjustments arising from the 2006/07 audit, as any changes to these accounts would be reported in future Annual Governance Reports to the committee. However, as requested, revised accounts for 2007/08 and 2008/09 would be presented to a future meeting of the committee.
- During 2010/11, in accordance with the Action Plan, further discussions would take place as to which Council is best placed to produce the committee's accounts in order to improve the efficiency of producing the accounts.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) note the final position of the 2006/07 Statement of Accounts and the current position with the audit of the 2007/08 Statement of Accounts;
- (2) request a report from the Head of Finance, Norfolk County Council, and the Head of Finance, Norwich City Council, to update members on actions taken to address the issues raised by the Audit Commission in the action plans in respect of the Statement of Accounts for 2007/2008 and 2008/2009.

5. PETITION

(The Chair had agreed earlier in the meeting to defer this item until the petitioner was present.)

Bakers Road

Jac Soloman presented the committee with a petition on behalf of residents of Bakers Road requesting additional parking spaces for the south side of Bakers Road. He referred to implementation of the St Augustine's Gyratory and the permanent closure of the eastern end of Bakers Road and suggested that as part of the scheme parking bays should be put in on the south side of the road. Photographs of the road were circulated at the meeting. A signature had been obtained from each of the occupied households.

The Transportation Manager said that parking bays in Bakers Road had not been included in the costs for the implementation of the gyratory scheme. It would cost around £20-30,000 to create a lay-by and this was an additional cost which would require funding. The bays would also require permission from English Heritage because parking bays would obscure the City Walls. It was also not the responsibility of the Highways Agency Committee to provide additional parking spaces and therefore she could not recommend that the committee supported this proposal.

During discussion members considered that there was parking on the north side of Bakers Road and that as it would no longer be a through road the alignment of the yellow lines should be reviewed.

RESOLVED to place Bakers Road on the list of requests for Annual Waiting Restrictions which will be considered at the committee's meeting in September.

6. MAJOR ROADWORKS – REGULAR MONITORING

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the Head of Transportation, to note the report.

CHAIR