

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 17 MARCH 2016
ITEM 7

REPORT for meeting to be held on 17 March 2016

Review of management and delivery of Push the Pedalways

Summary: The report sets out the process the council went through in securing the cycle ambition funding for the Push the Pedalways schemes and how the project was managed and delivered.

Recommendation: Scrutiny committee is asked to comment on how the first phase of the Cycle City Ambition-funded project was managed and delivered and suggest ways that experience with phase one can be used to inform delivery of future local highway investment.

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Report

Background to development of a cycle network for Norwich

1. Transport policy in Norwich is set out in the [Norwich Transportation Strategy](#) (NATS), last reviewed in 2006 and adopted by Norfolk County Council together with the city council and Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils. The transport strategy is designed to help deliver the growth within the Norwich Area and address the problems, such as congestion, associated with this. The strategy is intended to ensure Norwich develops as a sustainable urban community, with a transport system that meets its needs.
2. In 2010 an implementation plan for NATS was adopted. Along with measures such as the Northern Distributor Road (NDR) and bus rapid transit routes, the need for a package of cycling and walking improvements was identified. It was agreed to deliver the cycling improvements across a network. This network was developed by the city council with the other Greater Norwich councils and following widespread engagement with local cycling groups it was adopted in June 2012, when an associated map was also launched.
3. The comprehensive network covers the urban area and consists of seven strategic routes called pedalways. Five are radial routes and two orbital, with neighbourhood routes providing a finer grained network between pedalways; the intention being to provide a safe and convenient route network between residential areas and all major centres within the urban and urban fringe.

The Cycle City Ambition Grant (CCAG) funding bid

6. On 15 February 2013, the coalition government announced that the 28 cities with City Deal status were able to apply for cycle ambition grant funding. Following approval by cabinet on 17 April 2013, a funding bid was submitted by the city council.
7. The bid was for an ambitious programme of 22 projects called Push the Pedalways that focused on the improvement of the pink pedalway, one of the strategic cycle routes identified in the cycle network and links to it. The eight mile route runs between the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital and Salhouse Road. The proposals included in the bid were focused predominantly on cycling improvements, but also included measures for pedestrians and green infrastructure and public realm enhancements.
8. The government was keen proposals supported growth and this pedalway was chosen as it link employment growth locations at the Norwich Research Park (NRP) and city centre, with housing growth in the east of the city in Broadland, as well as existing residential communities in-between.
9. The aim of the bid was to provide a route where cyclists would be provided with either a route separated from other motor vehicles or where, if shared, speeds would be 20 mph or less. The bid also highlighted the city's ambition of doubling the level of cycling over 10 years.

10. The application was supported financially by the Norwich Clinical Commissioning Group and Norfolk County Council's public health service as part of the Healthy Norwich Initiative. Norfolk County Council provided funding through the Local Transport Plan budget and Broadland Council also provided funding. The application was endorsed by UEA, South Norfolk Council, Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, Norwich Research Park, Norwich BID and the Norwich Cycling Campaign.
11. In August 2013, the government confirmed the city council was one of eight successful cities and would receive £3.7m. This was supplemented with £2m of matched funds from the organisations listed above. From the outset, the programme needed to be delivered within a tight timescale. The award of the grant stated that the Cycle City Ambition funding should be spent by 30 September 2015, and any match funding used to support the programme by 31 March 2016.
12. A copy of the bid is available online at https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20187/cycling/1715/push_the_pedalways

Management of programme delivery

Governance

13. Historically, the vast majority of funding for transport infrastructure improvements within the city has been awarded to Norfolk County Council, with the city council as its partner. For this grant, the roles were reversed and the city council was the accountable body. So programme-specific governance was set up, which included representation from all funding partners, as well as the involvement of external expert advice, which was a condition of the DfT grant.

Resources

14. Delivery of the 22-project, £5.7m pink pedalway programme was beyond the resource base of the city council to deliver on its own. Assistance was therefore sought from the county council, along with its highways professional services partner. In common with other capital work delivered under the aegis of the highways agency agreement, works construction would be undertaken by the county council's highways delivery contractor.
15. Specific additional staff resource provided included:
 - Norfolk County Council seconded a project engineer to the city council for duration of the funding to act as programme manager.
 - A programme assistant and public engagement officer were recruited by the city council on fixed term contracts to assist the programme manager in project administration and public consultations.
 - An additional landscape architect was recruited by the city council on a fixed term basis.

- Project engineers/managers were mainly provided by the county council's professional services partner, Mott MacDonald.

Timescales

16. From the outset, the DfT set a challenging timescales for both the submission of a bid and delivery of a grant funded programme. The bid timescale allowed less than 10 weeks for a submission to be made, which needed to include a full economic assessment. Scope for feasibility work to help inform such a bid was therefore very limited.
17. The timescale for delivering the programme was originally set to be completed by 31 March 2016, with DfT funding utilised before 30 September 2015. This deadline for the DfT was subsequently extended by six months, allowing DfT funded elements to be delivered by 31 March 2016. This helpful extension still meant the overall programme needed to be delivered within a 31-month period (with confirmation of the successful bids having been delayed by two months to August 2013 at the start).
18. Further timescale constraints were caused by the two successive pre-election periods that occurred during the programme. This limited when certain key consultations could be carried out and also delayed some constructions, with the effect of telescoping the programme.

Consultation

19. One of the fundamental drivers of the bid was that stakeholders and the public should be closely involved in the development of the schemes that were to be delivered on-site. An initial consultation event was held in November 2013 at Blackfriars Hall the public were invited to provide input and their thoughts for each location where work was proposed.
20. On the simpler schemes such as the Bluebell Road and Earlham Road zebra crossings and the Hub (cycle parking) projects, the consultation was straightforward and consisted of inviting comments from frontages, ward members and stakeholders.
21. On the more complex projects the consultation was significantly more extensive. For example on the Tombland project there was a design workshop held in February 2014.
22. Many of the major projects included a consultation process where the public were asked to comment on potential options. This approach was taken on The Avenues, Park Lane to Vauxhall Street, Tombland and Heathgate. As part of this process there was an extensive letter/leaflet drop to the areas affected inviting feedback and at least one public exhibition in the locality where staff were available to talk through the proposals with residents.
23. Once an option had been selected there was a further statutory consultation on the traffic regulation orders and details of the scheme proposals. Again this

involved extensive letter drops and further exhibitions. For the Tombland project, significant further consultation took place to refine the scheme once the feedback to this consultation had been collated

24. The Norwich Highways Agency Committee (NHAC) considered the results of each options and statutory consultations which ensured decisions were taken in public. The exception to this was Heathgate, where the route of the new path was outside the jurisdiction of the committee. In this instance, planning consent was required; this therefore being considered by the council's planning committee. Consent of the Mousehold conservators was also required..
25. While the consultation was invaluable for ensuring that the public was able to influence the outcome of the projects, it did cause delays in the programme in some cases and telescoped the time available to deliver significant improvements for cycling in areas where there was no appetite for reducing through-traffic.

Finance

26. The bid to the DfT was for £3.72m. When it was submitted, a total of £1.830m of local contributions was identified as match funding, giving a total of £5.55m. Following the success of the bid a further £190,000 of local funding was made available. This resulted in a total budget for the programme of £5.74m. The local contributions were a combination of Local Transport Plan funding and other county council grants, city council capital programme monies, S106 funding and funding made available by public health/the Clinical Commissioning Group, Broadland District Council and the UEA.
27. The funding was predominantly capital and ring fenced for transport infrastructure (in the case of the DfT funding specifically for the programme). Delivery of the programme did not have a financial impact on other council service provision.
28. In preparing the bid within a constrained timescale, all cost estimates were inevitably based on limited detail and with an assumption of what the public would find acceptable. Furthermore initial budget estimates were prepared within the context of the then county highways delivery contract with Kier May Gurney, whereas most of the works delivery was undertaken by the subsequent contractor, Tarmac (from 1 April 2014) under different terms. This added to normal cost uncertainties associated with construction projects such as utility diversions, ground difficulties or constraints that only become apparent once on site.
29. As feasibility work and initial consultations were completed and projects were completed on the ground it was necessary to re-prioritise projects and re-allocate budgets to ensure that the programme did not overspend. Securing a second round of cycle ambition funding has meant that it has been possible to move elements of the planned first phase such as the 20mph zone and associated traffic calming in the city centre to the second phase to ensure that the critical elements of phase one are delivered within available budget.

Programme delivered

30. The Push the Pedalways programme has delivered an improved eight-mile cycle route between the NRP and Salhouse Road. Without the government funding it is likely that improvements would have taken many years to materialise. Even improvements to address known cycle accident problems – such as the signal works at the junction of The Avenues and Colman Road would be likely to have had to remain on hold for several years.
31. It was inevitable that a programme put together on the basis of very limited feasibility studies would have to be dynamic. The need to ensure the programme was delivered on time and within budget meant it was continually reshaped to take account of public acceptance of schemes, reallocation of budgets, cost over runs and resource availability.
32. The original bid contained proposals for 22 individual projects. The bid identified the problems at each location and made suggestions as to how these problems could be solved. Of the 22 projects 12 were delivered in line with the bid documents and on occasions with enhancements. These 12 projects were:
- Cycle parking improvements (hubs) at the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital, UEA and in the vicinity of Norwich Market.
 - The introduction of a zebra crossing on Bluebell Road,
 - The elevation of the zebra crossing on Earlham Road by Park Lane onto a raised table.
 - The segregation of the signalled crossing on Chapel Field Road by Vauxhall Street to provide dedicated facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, improved cycle routes through Chapelfield Gardens, the ability for cyclists to use Chapel Field North in both directions and the closure of little Bethel Street to motor traffic.
 - A contraflow cycle lane on Magdalen Street between Bull Close Road and Cowgate and on Cowgate between Peacock Street and Magdalen Street.
 - Reduced traffic speeds in Tombland and reduction of carriageway width, along with associated public realm and pedestrian improvements. The right turn facility into Bishopgate from Palace Street is to be provided as part of a signal upgrade scheme due to be completed in July.
 - An off carriageway cycle route from Gilders Way to Cannell Green will shortly be provided.
 - A traffic free route from Heathgate to Gurney Road, with improved links along Gurney Road from the new route to Valley Drive, motion sensitive lighting along Valley Drive. A 20mph limit was introduced on Gurney Road, Vincent Road and Britannia Road.
 - A traffic-free route across Heartsease recreation ground and a shared zebra cycle crossing across Woodside Road.
 - Installation of a number of automatic cycle monitoring sites across the city.
33. Six projects were delivered with amendments to the original bid. These were:

34. The Avenues: The public did not support the removal of through-traffic. However, the casualty reduction schemes at the junctions of Colman Road and George Borrow Road and verge and parking improvements that were part of the bid were implemented. More effective traffic-calming measures introduced in The Avenues between Colman Road and Bluebell Road and advisory cycle lanes were provided.
35. Park Lane to Vauxhall Street: The plan to remove through-traffic from Park Lane was not supported by the public; however, other elements of the bid including contraflow cycling on Essex Street and the replacement of a signalled crossing on Unthank Road with a zebra crossing on a better desire line were delivered. Instead of removing through-traffic, the parking on Avenue Road was rationalised and the traffic-calming improved.
36. St Andrews Plain hub: The bid proposed secure covered parking here, along with a cycle barometer (a visual counter display of the number of cyclists passing a point) and a public bicycle pump. Concerns about the maintenance liabilities meant it was not possible to provide these features, although additional cycle stands were provided.
37. Salhouse Road: The bid proposed a toucan crossing on Salhouse House to link to a new off carriageway cycle path through woodland parallel to Salhouse Road to connect to new development. As pressure grew on the cycle ambition budgets, it was decided that responsibility for providing the path should divert back to the developer, and therefore only the toucan crossing was provided.
38. 20mph areas. The bid proposed introducing 20mph areas in the city centre and in Heartsease and University wards. The latter two were completed as was the consultation on the city centre. However, installation of the city centre area has been transferred into the second phase of cycle ambition funding.
39. Directional signage and clutter removal: It was intended the entire cycle network would be signed and decluttered. However, the level of complexity and staff resource required to design the signing strategy for the network was significantly underestimated. This combined with software and hardware problems with the equipment used to design signs meant implementing the entire network was unaffordable. The pink pedalway will be signed and decluttered as part of this project and the designs for other pedalways will be retained and implemented as part of future phases of work.
40. The remaining four projects in the original bid have been deferred. Simplifying cycling and loading pedestrianised areas will be considered as part of the second round of cycle ambition funding, while the other three projects; Earlham Road/ Guardian Road Roundabout, Adelaide Street and Laundry Lane will be considered in the future when funding is available.

Lessons learned for delivery of future phases of Cycle City Ambition

41. It is acknowledged the delivery of the first phase of the city cycle ambition funding has proved challenging. It is likely funding for such infrastructure as well as

highway improvements more generally will continue to be based on competitive bidding rather than annual budget grants. This is, after all, the way funding for the second phase of Cycle City Ambition grant funding was successfully obtained.

42. An independent report into the delivery of the programme has been commissioned into the management and delivery of the programme. Its findings, along with any recommendations arising from this meeting, will be incorporated into the delivery of both CCAG2 (£8.4m) and the LEP Local Growth Fund funded element of NATS (£11.1m). In particular, delivery of these programmes is fully integrated in the overall delivery of NATS (Transport for Norwich) being led by the county council (albeit with still the same involvement of South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils). This is in similar vein to previous investment such as the £10m Norwich Public Transport Major scheme, which successfully delivered extensive city centre bus priority, a new bus station and improved pedestrian safety on Prince of Wales Road.
43. Using this approach it allows the city and county councils to work jointly to exploit their respective areas of expertise and effectively deliver the future transport infrastructure for Norwich.