NORWICH City Council

MINUTES

Norwich Highways Agency committee

10:00 to 12:00 **22 March 2018**

Present:	**County Councillors:**	**City Councillors:**
	Fisher (chair) (v)*	Stonard (vice chair) (v)
	Vincent (v)	Bremner (v)
	Bills	Carlo
	Jones (C)	Lubbock
	Thomson	Peek

*(v) voting member

1. Public Questions/Petitions

Public question 1- Magdalen Street Flyover

Mr Tony Clarke, Robert Gybson Way, asked the following question:

> "The works on the Magdalen Street flyover appeared to have been completed. I believe that the budgeted cost was £300,000. In view of the delays in completing the works and their very extensive nature, I would like to ask what the final cost is and what was the nature of the additional works?"

Councillor Fisher, chair, replied on behalf of the committee:

> "The outturn works cost was approximately £753,000. The nature of concrete repairs is such that it isn't possible to determine the full extent of repairs, particularly depth of repairs, until the defective concrete has been broken out. The contract included a constraint in terms of the amount of concrete that could be broken out on each column section at any one time. This was for safety reasons i.e. to avoid the columns being weakened to an extent that their load carrying capacity was compromised. This was particularly important bearing in mind that the structure continued to carry live traffic throughout the contract. The works were carefully phased so that, for example, some repairs would be carried out on one pier and then repairs would be carried out on another pier and then back to the first pier etc. It is this phasing which extended the contract duration and led to the significant increase in cost.
>
> Although the works exceeded the initial budget estimate, the works were fully funded within the existing bridges maintenance budget that is in place for maintenance such as this."

Mr Clarke thanked the chair for answering his question about the additional funding for the scheme and said that he had been curious about this following reading an article in the local press on funding for bridge maintenance in Norfolk.

Question 2 : Newmarket Road junctions

Councillor Wright, Eaton Ward, asked the following question:

> "At the Norwich Highways Agency committee (NHAC) meeting in March last year, the committee took a decision to defer proposals to remove traffic signals at the Christchurch/Lime Tree Road and the Leopold/Eaton Road junctions with the Newmarket Road.
>
> In January of this year at a meeting of the county's environment, development and transport committee, a sum of £1.75 million was earmarked for further work on these signalled junctions along with the Daniels Road. Officers will bring a report to a future meeting at which time residents can have their say on the proposals.
>
> Since there are many residents who would be adversely affected by any changes to the traffic lights there is much concern about this issue.
>
> As councillors we are constantly asked - "Why would the city and county councils wish to put the local residents' lives at risk by removing these vital traffic lights and expecting them to turn across the Newmarket road without the safety of traffic lights, possibly causing more accidents and hold ups on the Newmarket Road?"
>
> To help those residents and local Eaton councillors understand the need to pursue such an unpopular, dangerous and costly scheme, can the committee chair explain the rationale behind attempting to reintroduce such a scheme?"

Councillor Fisher, chair, replied on behalf of the committee:

> "As you say there is £1.75 million allocated to looking at ways of reducing congestion and improving journey times at the Newmarket Road / Outer Ring Road roundabout.
>
> The network and analysis team at Norfolk County Council has been investigating traffic flows at the roundabout and on the approaches to it. This includes the signalled junctions of Newmarket Road with Leopold Road and Lime Tree Road. This is being done to identify how best to improve traffic flow in the area. Once this data has been carefully and fully evaluated we will be able to give further consideration to potential proposals for these junctions.
>
> No decision has been made about the removal of any traffic signals in the area and nor would it be made without full consultation with affected parties and approval at this committee.
>
> As you can imagine this is a complex issue and it is essential that all options are fully explored which is why it has taken longer than expected for initial proposals

> to be brought to this committee. I am advised that a report on the proposed measures to reduce congestion on Newmarket Road will be presented to this committee later this year."

Councillor Wright referred to the report considered at the environment, development and transport (ETD) committee (Norfolk County Council, 19 January 2018) and said that he was pleased that there would be a consultation before a scheme was implemented and that residents' fears would have been allayed if more information had been included in this report. In response the chair reiterated that there would be further consultation before a decision on the removal of traffic lights was made by the committee. The transportation and network manager, Norwich City Council, explained that the report to the ETD committee in January was a standard report to approve the allocation of budgets to schemes. During discussion a member referred to the NHAC meeting in March of last year and commented that it was clear that this committee had not made a decision on the removal of the traffic lights and that it would be considered at a future committee meeting. Another member said that the ETD report should have been more explicit.

Question 3:

Mr Chris Speed, First Eastern Counties, asked the following question:

> "First Eastern Counties is supportive of any measures to improve air quality in Norfolk.
>
> We have invested in new / newer vehicles to improve Euro standards, including the latest Euro VI over the last 2 years.
>
> Twenty vehicles in Norwich are Euro VI standard with an additional two arriving by the end of March. These vehicles emit miniscule amounts of PM and NOX.
>
> With effective bus priority emissions per bus passenger kilometres can be 75 per cent lower than for car passenger kilometres.
>
> We are the only bus operator in the City to have Euro VI vehicles and we are continually committed to introduce more investment.
>
> Additionally, we use other technology to assist, such as all of our vehicles have automatic shut off after approximately 3 minutes idling and each vehicle is fitted with DriveGreen, which monitors driving behaviour and idling.
>
> We currently do the majority of our loading and unloading at Castle Meadow, which can take varied times and we would like clarification of what you view as idling as I assume this does not include the loading of passengers, for which the engine must be switched on to lower the floor to ensure passenger safety?"

Councillor Stonard, vice-chair, replied on behalf of the committee:

> "Firstly I would like to say on behalf of the committee that we are very appreciative of First's efforts to update its vehicle fleet and aid with the efforts to improve air quality in Norwich.

I am pleased to confirm that the buses that are actively boarding or alighting passengers will not subject to any enforcement action.

I think it would be useful if I took this opportunity to dispel a number of myths that have arisen since the city's council decision to apply for powers to enforce against engine idling were made public. The first of which is that in no way is it a money raising exercise. The £20 fixed penalty notice is a token amount set by government. We don't actually want to be issuing these; what we want is for the driver to comply when first spoken to and switch their engine off. More importantly for them to realise in future the pollution they are causing and switch their engine off whenever it is appropriate.

Secondly this is not targeted at any particular groups of individuals or transport providers. We want all drivers to switch off their engines if they are unnecessarily idling, be they bus or coach drivers, taxi drivers, delivery drivers or private motorists. It is also important to note that the fixed penalty notice will be the given to the driver and not their employer

Finally, these powers will only apply to the public highway and not private land, and can only be used when the vehicle is parked up within the Air Quality Management Area of Norwich. Vehicles waiting at traffic lengths or in road works are not affected by the powers. However, saying that, it would actually help pollution in our city if drivers voluntarily switched off their engines when they know they are going to be stationary for an extended period of time. Auto stop functions are becoming increasingly popular on new cars which cut out the engine when the car is taken out of gear."

Mr Speed thanked the vice chair for his response and confirmed that he had no further questions.

2. Declarations of Interest

During discussion on item 4, Transport for Norwich – 20mph Areas Associated with the Blue and Yellow Pedalways, Councillor Lubbock declared an other interest in that she lived in Unthank Road.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018.

4. Transport for Norwich – 20mph Areas Associated with the Blue and Yellow Pedalways

(Councillor Lubbock declared an interest during this item.)

The chair introduced the report.

During discussion, Councillor Lubbock, Eaton Ward councillor, said that she welcomed the roll out of 20mph zones and was pleased that the whole of Eaton would be a 20mph

zone as large zones were more likely to get compliance. However, she was disappointed that Unthank Road and Bluebell Road were not included in the consultation, where other streets such as Sandy Lane were. The network and transport manager referred to the criteria set out in the report and explained that Unthank Road was not considered suitable because it did not have pedestrian generating frontages (ie, school or shopping parade) and would require extensive traffic calming measures to be effective in speed reduction and provide value for money. Unthank Road was not the same as Sandy Lane or Eaton Road. The safety audit team would not be satisfied with the use of signage only in Unthank Road.

Discussion ensued in which other members spoke positively about the opportunity to use Cycle Ambition funding to further the city council's priority to implement 20mph zones across the city. The vice chair also pointed out that that slower speeds achieved through the Pedalways made it safer for pedestrians and improved air quality. The Pedalways scheme was half way through implementation but in some areas of the city cycling had already doubled.

A member said that reducing speeds saved lives and that as greater compliance was achieved with wide areas of 20mph it was cost effective to implement larger zones in the first place, saving on traffic regulation orders. She suggested that the committee revisited the policy and that the city council showed some flexibility in its application. She said that she supported Councillor Lubbock's request. The head of citywide development, Norwich City Council, said that the roads included in the consultation were considered to be successful in reducing traffic speeds. Works to Unthank Road would not be sufficient for compliance or enforcement. The proposed schemes were where value for money could be obtained within the costed budget. There was no funding available for additional streets.

The chair in summing up said that this was a positive report and that the evidence from the officers was that the areas covered by the consultation should not be amended.

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

(1) approve for consultation the scheme to introduce 20mph zones in the residential areas surrounding the blue and yellow pedalways;

(2) ask the head of city development services to carry out the necessary statutory legal procedures to advertise the road notice and speed restriction order for the areas of 20mph shown on Plan Nos CCAG2/21/01 and 02.

5. Transport for Norwich – Review of Essex Street Cycle Contraflow

(Local members for Town Close, County Councillor Corlett and City Councillor Davis had submitted a written statement which was circulated at the meeting.)

Councillors Corlett and Davis addressed the committee on behalf of Essex Street residents and outlined their concerns. They suggested that a reduction in driver speed and prevention of drivers travelling the wrong way along Essex Street could be addressed by: introducing two pinch points with tree planting to slow down traffic; and, as the main problem was driver behaviour, for the committee to write to the local police

team. Essex Street was used as a rat run and to address and to reduce the number of large lorries cutting through it was suggested that a weight restriction of 7.5 tonnes should be imposed. Planning enforcement should be considered to ensure that the Tesco Metro store complied with planning permission in relation to delivery vehicles and use of the area around the store, to prevent lorries parking in Essex Street. To make it clear that cyclists should have priority, it was suggested that the full length of Essex Street was block marked as a contraflow cycle lane 1.2m from the kerb edge and that there should be either *share with care* or *give way* signs. The local members supported the addition of an island at the top of Essex Street and the change in priority to give way to traffic exiting Suffolk Square, provided there was clear signage. Consideration should also be made to a raised table or at least vivid road markings at the entrance of Essex Street to make it clear that it was a shared space and advising of the 20mph speed limit. Some residents had asked that the cycle route was re-routed along Rupert Street and down Trinity Street but the local members agreed with the officer view and did not support this as an alternative.

The transportation planner, Norwich City Council, responded to the issues raised by the local members. A weight restriction would be difficult to enforce and as the area required servicing by refuse vehicles and goods vehicles, there would be significant contravention of this restriction and it would be unlikely to be enforced. There was concern that some drivers were speeding in Essex Street, although average speeds were 18;7 mph. The design changes to the form of the changed priority with Suffolk Square and the cycle contraflow bypass would limit excessive speeds and make the one way order clearer to all drivers, whilst not impacting unnecessarily on all drivers and cyclists. The addition of tree planting could not be warranted on speed calming and safety grounds and would require the loss of a parking space for residents and their visitors. Officers would ask planning officers to investigate the concerns about non-compliance of planning consent at the Tesco's store. Members were advised that continuous cycle lane markings had been considered but there was concern that the lane would be driven in and therefore intermittent lines were considered to be more noticeable to drivers. The addition of two trees to demark the area where car parks was not considered to warrant the loss of a parking space and the creation of pinch points where the width was that of one vehicle would have a detrimental impact on cyclists. The proposed use of 20mph road markings would raise awareness of the speed limit to drivers leaving Unthank Road. Most streets allowed two way cycling and whilst the creation of a raised junction treatment would improve this space for walking and cycling, it would be costly and was not considered to be necessary or good value for money. Officers would share the findings of the survey with the police and advise them that there had been contraventions of the one way order.

During discussion the transportation and network manager, together with the transportation planner, referred to the report and addressed members' comments. The speed survey had been conducted over a seven day 24 hour count and the proportion of vehicles travelling at 40 or 50 mph was only slightly higher than other terraced streets. The imposition of a weight restriction would not be enforceable if it were not a blanket restriction and residents who required supermarket or goods delivered would be likely to object. In 2014, as part of the consultation on the Pink Pedalway, there had been very little support for closing Essex Street to general traffic. Sustrans had not recommended closure as part of its safety recommendations. City Ambition funding had been put aside for the remedial work to the Essex Street contraflow. The proposed scheme was within the budget.

In response to members' views that a pinch point, as suggested by the local members should be considered, the transportation and network manager said that the design could be revisited and following consultation with the chair, vice chair and local members, a pinchpoint could be included in the consultation. A member suggested that parked cars constrained vehicle speeds by narrowing the street. Members were advised that the safety audit team would be asked to review this proposal. A small chicane could encourage drivers to reduce speeds further.

The chair moved and Councillor Vincent seconded the recommendations as amended with the proposal to consider pinch points and to ask the chair to write to the Chief Constable regarding the findings reported in the traffic survey and summarised in the Sustrans report.

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

(1) agree to consult on the scheme detailed in appendix 1, subject to asking the head of citywide development to consider the proposal for a pinch point to calm traffic in Essex Street, and to consider consulting on it, following consultation with the chair, vice chair and local members;

(2) note that any representations received will be considered at a future meeting of the committee;

(3) ask the chair to write to the Chief Constable to advise him of the outcome of the Sustrans survey of Essex Street.

6. Review of Bus Lane Traffic Regulation Orders

The chair introduced the report and said that the traffic regulations were there for a purpose and should be enforced.

In response to a question, the principal planner (transportation), Norwich City Council, said that most bus lanes included taxies, but there were a few which did not permit the use of taxies, such as Geoffry Watling Way, and the yet to be completed bus and between Wendene and the new development at Three Score, Bowthorpe.

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

(1) note the position of the current and proposed enforcement cameras;

(2) delegate to the head of city development services the review and commencement of the statutory process of making any necessary changes to existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to enable all bus lanes to be enforced by camera;

(3) delegate to the head of development services the consideration of any representations received prior to finalising the revised TROs;

(4) delegate to the head of development services in discussion with the chair and vice chair the authority to decide when and where the camera enforcement should be deployed in the future;

(5) agree to the deployment of camera enforcement at the Earlham Green Lane Bus lane at Bowthorpe.

7. Enforcement of Parking Adjacent to Dropped Kerbs

The chair introduced the report and moved the recommendations as set out in the report which and commented that this was "common sense". The vice chair welcomed the proposal which meant that something could be done to deter drivers parking in front of dropped kerbs and blocking access. There was lots of case work that showed how frustrating this was to residents.

During discussion a member suggested that residents near to schools were the most affected and that at least once a term civil enforcement officers should visit schools. The transportation and network manager said that this was part of the civil enforcement officers' operations and that action would be taken.

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

(1) agree that the city council should use its powers under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to issue fixed penalty notices to vehicles parked in front of dropped kerbs even if no traffic regulation order exists;

(2) agree to an amendment to on-street parking permit terms and conditions to enable enforcement of obstructive parking adjacent to dropped kerbs for vehicle crossovers in Controlled Parking Zones.

8. Air Quality –Fixed Penalty, Stopping of Engines

The vice chair confirmed that, at its meeting on 14 March 2018, the city council's cabinet had approved the recommendation for the city council to apply to become a designated local authority for the purpose of issuing fixed penalties notices (FPNs) for stationary engine idling offences. He explained that the purpose of this was to manage air quality in Castle Meadow and to encourage bus operators to ensure that drivers switched off engines when idling. It was clearly not a money making scheme aimed at drivers in general. The intention was not to collect fines but to alter driver behaviour in the same way as seat belts were introduced.

During discussion members welcomed the proposal and noted that academic studies demonstrated the significance of switching off engines to reduce emissions and improve air quality. Two members considered that members of the public should be subject to FPNs for stationary engine idling offences and said that they often asked drivers to switch off their engines when stationary in traffic. Another member said that technology was currently being introduced which automatically switched off the engine when the vehicle was idle.

RESOLVED, unanimously (with all 4 voting members voting in favour) to note the attached report to "*Fixed penalty, stopping of engines"* and that the recommendations were approved on 14 March 2018.

9. Renewal of The Highways Agency Agreement Between Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council

During discussion members the head of citywide development referred to the report and answered questions on the functions of the city and county council in relation to winter maintenance which was primarily the function of the county council's highways service and not part of the highways agreement. In extreme weather the city council would deploy labour from other services to clear footways, such as sheltered housing schemes, but the severe weather did not last long enough for this to be effective. The city council provided grit bins in areas where there was a hill for residents to use.

Discussion ensued in which a member referred to the difficulty of understanding which functions were conducted by either council or were shared. This was not clear in the report which made it difficult to scrutinise. The vice chair said that a county council officer had mistakenly referred a city council resident to the city council to ask about gritting. The head of citywide development had contacted the resident and the issue was now resolved.

Members considered that the agreement was working well and concurred with the recommendation to extend the current agreement for another year.

RESOLVED, unanimously (with 4 voting members voting in favour), to note that Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council have agreed to amend the Highways Agency Agreement and to extend it for a period of 1 year until 31 March 2020 as detailed in the two attached reports.

10. Committee schedule 2018-19

RESOLVED, unanimously (with all 4 voting members voting in favour) to agree the committee schedule, subject to approval at the city council's annual council, the schedule of meetings of the Norwich Highways Agency committee for the civic year 2018-2019, with all meetings to be at 10:00 and held at City Hall, as follows:

Thursday, 7 June 2018
Thursday, 20 September 2018
Thursday, 20 December 2018
Thursday, 21 March 2019.

CHAIR