

Report to Norwich highways agency committee

Item

21 July 2016

Report of Executive Director of Environment and Community
Services (Norfolk County Council)

10

Subject Transport for Norwich (TfN) and Northern Distributer Road
(NDR) update report

Purpose

On 8 July 2016, Norfolk County Council's environmental and development committee considered the attached report which updates members on the progress made so far on NATS since the last update report in July 2015.

Recommendation

This report is for member information only and does not seek any specific approval; however, it should be noted that some of the schemes and proposals contained in this report will be subject to separate reports seeking permission to go forward to consultation and possible future delivery.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the Norwich City Council corporate priority to make Norwich a prosperous and vibrant city' and 'to make Norwich a safe, clean and low carbon city" and County Council Service Plan Priority to implement the Local Transport Plan and Norwich Area Transportation Strategy.

Financial implications

This report does not include financial implications as permission to take the schemes mentioned forward is not sought. The financial implications will be addressed and covered in future reports.

Ward/s: All Wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Bremner – Environment and sustainable development

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

Environment Development and Transport Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Transport for Norwich (TfN) and Northern Distributer Road (NDR) update report
Date of meeting:	8 July 2016
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe, Executive Director of Environment and Community Services
Strategic impact: The Norwich Area Transport Strategy (NATS) Implementation Plan ('Transport for Norwich' - TfN) includes pedestrian enhancements in the city centre, public transport improvements (including some Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors), cycling infrastructure and traffic management in the suburbs as well as delivery of the NDR.	

Executive summary

This report provides an update on progress made so far on NATS since the last update report in July 2015.

Recommendations:

- i) **Committee is asked to comment on the projects set out in this report as part of the ongoing commitment to deliver the Transport for Norwich plan.**
- ii) **Committee is asked to agree the additional works proposed at Postwick junction to improve the operation of one of the existing roundabouts and to provide improved pedestrian and cycle access from the junction to/from the Broadland Business Park.**
- iii) **Committee is asked to note the latest update on progress of the NDR project.**
- iv) **Committee is asked to agree to a review of the Norwich Highways Agreement to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose and efficiencies are realised.**

1. NATS Implementation Plan - City Centre proposals update

1.1. Background

1.2. This report provides an update on key activity since July 2015.

1.3. Cycle City Ambition Grant 2

1.4. The programme of work on the second phase of the Cycle City Ambition programme focusing on the yellow pedalway and blue pedalway are progressing on schedule with the completion of the Colegate/St Georges Street, Newmarket Road Toucan Crossing, Mile Cross – Angel Road via Pointers Field and Opie Street schemes.

1.5. Golden Ball Street

Works started on the improvements in January 2016 and is expected to be complete in May 2017. The projects are funded from the Local Growth Fund and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Improvements will include improved access to car parks in the area, improved and increased disabled parking and better pedestrian facilities in Westlegate and St Stephens. In delivering this work, the opportunity has been taken to carry out some essential highway maintenance in the area to reduce further road

works in future years.

1.6. Local Growth Fund (LGF)

- 1.7. A five year programme of work utilising funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was set out in the July 2015 report to Committee.
- 1.8. Feasibility studies have been completed into Salhouse Road BRT and the Broadland Way cycle link alongside ongoing design work on the Wymondham – Hethersett cycle link, A11 north slip to Cringleford, Roundhouse Way and the Eaton Centre and Interchange schemes.
- 1.9. Two BRT feasibility proposals on the A140 Cromer Road and A1067 Fakenham Road will be taken forward in 2016. The development of these proposals will take into account the delivery of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road and enable the councils to submit bids for additional funding in the future to provide the improvements required.
- 1.10. The final funded city centre measure is the conversion of Rose Lane to two-way and the removal of general traffic from Prince of Wales Road. The feasibility and design development of this project is already planned for 2017/18.

1.11. Review of the Highways Agency Agreement

Officers are proposing to carry out a full review of the Norwich Agency Agreement including the Norwich Joint Highways Agency Committee. It is proposed an in-depth review is carried out over Autumn/Winter 2016 with recommendations being reported back to this Committee in spring 2017. A review is proposed to ensure the structure for delivery is fit for purpose and services are sustained for the future and provide value for money.

1.12. Park and Ride contract

A new park and ride contract between Norfolk County Council and Konectbus started in September 2015 to run all six Park and Ride bus services and the management and running of Norwich bus station.

The contract, worth up to £32m, will last for five years, with an option to extend for a further three. The new contract has saved the council £0.5m in running costs for each year of the contract.

Highlights of the new contract are:

- 18 new buses on the City centre services and refurbished vehicles on the remainder.
- More comfortable cloth seats with headrests. Free on board WiFi.
- Media screens with next stop announcements, promotional messages about the city, and about park and ride. CCTV systems.
- Telematics to improve driving style and so passenger comfort.
- New cross city links to open up access to more parts of the city without changing bus. Routes are Thickthorn to Airport, Sprowston to Harford.
- An improved 10 minutes frequency for Airport-Thickthorn during peak times. Other routes will have improved frequency during the life of the contract.
- New Norwich Railway Station link from Postwick, providing alternative parking for railway users and people who work near the station. This route will also serve Broadland Business Park and County Hall and connect to the Bus Station. Plusbus train and bus tickets will be accepted.

- A dedicated service to University of East Anglia, Norwich and Norfolk University Hospital and Norwich Research Park. Longer hours of operations during term time

1.13. **Network Management performance and Christmas parking review**

Norfolk County Council is aiming to improve co-ordination and collaboration with partner organisations to help relieve traffic congestion. Aside from day-to-day network reliability there are key times e.g. the Christmas shopping period and events like the Lord Mayor's procession, cycle and road races that can impact on journey times. The events provide welcome economic benefits for the area and we would wish to manage these proactively to minimise disruption. Partners working together to improve co-ordination include:

Norwich City Council
Norwich Business Improvement District (BID)
Norfolk Constabulary
Bus Operators
Chaplefield Shopping Centre(INTU)
The Forum Trust
Castle Mall

2. **NDR update**

2.1. **Background**

2.2. The main construction contract formally commenced on 4 January 2016. This report provides an update on the progress made so far.

2.3. **Programme**

2.4. Construction works are progressing well with significant earthworks ongoing. Preliminary environmental works are mostly completed and works have commenced on drainage and the new Buxton Road and Plumstead Road bridges. The current practical completion date is forecast to be 19 February 2018, which is one week behind the original completion date, albeit the entire delivery team are targeting an opening date late in December 2017.

2.5. A presentation will be made to Committee highlighting the work completed to date.

2.6. **Department for Transport (DfT) funding**

2.7. A quarterly report was issued to DfT on 15 April 2016.

2.8. Funding from DfT amounting to £16.7m for the period 15/16 has been received. An up-dated funding profile for 16/17 amounting to £31.3m has been submitted to DfT. This funding allocation is expected to be released by DfT in two instalments the first in August 2016 and the second in November 2016.

2.9. **Progress with discharge of Development Consent Order Requirements**

2.10. The Development Consent Order for the NDR included a number of Requirements to be discharged during various stages of its construction. All pre-commencement Requirements have been discharged prior to the work starting on site.

The following table is an update on progress with the off-line traffic management schemes.

Requirement and Timescale for discharge	Details of Requirement	Progress to Date
26 (Pre-opening of the NDR)	Development and implementation of a scheme for the routeing of vehicles to and from the A47 (to the west of Norwich) to International Airport and Cromer.	Work on-going to develop a strategy for public consultation. The public consultation is currently planned for later in 2016.
27 (Pre-opening of the NDR)	Development of a scheme and timetable for implementation for traffic calming measures in Weston Longville and Hockering.	<p><u>Weston Longville</u> Work currently on-going, in conjunction with parish representatives, to finalise traffic calming proposals that can be taken forward for public consultation is planned for later in 2016.</p> <p><u>Hockering</u> Officers have started working with representatives of Hockering Parish Council to develop a proposal or proposals that can be taken forward for public consultation later in 2016.</p>
28 (Pre-opening of the NDR)	<p>Development and timetable for implementation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhanced traffic calming measures in Costessey West End, including the feasibility of using average speed cameras, a scheme for the enforcement of the existing weight restrictions (including the potential for camera enforcement) on roads over the River Wensum, namely Ringland Road, Taverham Lane and Costessey Lane, a 30mph speed limit based on a speed limit assessment on Ringland Road through Ringland, a scheme for traffic calming on Hall Lane (north and south), Drayton. 	<p><u>Costessey West End</u> A key element of using average speed cameras is gaining agreement from those responsible for camera enforcement. Agreement in principle for an average speed camera scheme is therefore being sought from the Norfolk Safety Camera Partnership. If no agreement is reached, then a scheme of more traditional calming measures would need to be developed. Any proposed scheme is currently planned for implementation in 2017.</p> <p><u>Weight Restriction Enforcement</u> Preliminary work into the feasibility of options to improve enforcement currently on-going. Any proposed enforcement measures are currently planned for implementation in 2017.</p> <p><u>Ringland</u> Preliminary consultations for the proposed 30mph speed limit have been undertaken. Comments from this consultation are being reviewed prior to finalising the proposals for planned implementation in late 2016/early 2017.</p> <p><u>Drayton Hall Lane</u> A scheme has been developed following public consultation and is planned for implementation in early 2017.</p>

- 2.11. It is worth reminding Committee that a condition of the DfT funding is for NCC to “commit to a funded and timetabled package of sustainable transport in the city centre, on the basis of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy”. This is all part of the integrated approach of delivering these proposals as part of the NATS Implementation Plan (‘Transport for Norwich’), which were updated and agreed by Cabinet in November 2013.

3. Postwick Hub update

3.1. Background

- 3.2. The junction was fully opened to traffic in December 2015 and all works were completed in February 2016. Initially, during January and early February, the junction was monitored and temporary traffic signals were used at key locations in peak periods to manage the flows of traffic as drivers got used to the new junction layout. This initial additional traffic management was not required after early February and the junction has been operating in its normal state since that time.

3.3. Additional works

- 3.4. In line with good practice, the junction operation has continued to be monitored and some minor works have been identified to improve operational performance. The provision of a segregated left turn lane which can be used for traffic as it crosses the original bridge heading towards Norwich is being considered. This is being proposed to resolve an unusual effect whereby drivers are currently delaying entry onto the roundabout due to uncertainty whether approaching traffic circulating the roundabout is exiting onto the bridge (as there is a two lane exit).
- 3.5. This change is intended to improve the traffic flow at that junction, particularly during the peak period, and it is considered that this will improve movement through the traffic signal junction and reduce the queues on the slip road approach from Oaks Lane. These queues are only observed during the morning peak period. The works are estimated to cost circa £100k. The cost will be met from the 2016/17 highways capital programme if Members agree to this.
- 3.6. In addition to the segregated left turn lane, a request was received from existing businesses on Broadland Business Park for the provision of a footway improvement to the business park from the existing bridge. This link is proposed as part of the delivery of the new Broadland Gate Business Park. In view of the existing demand for use by pedestrians (and potentially cyclists) it is considered appropriate to deliver this new Footway/Cycle facility ahead of the new Business Park. This can be funded by NCC with a repayment of the costs from the Section 106 agreement when the site is first developed.
- 3.7. A Stage 3 Safety Audit has been undertaken on the Postwick Hub junction following it opening to traffic in December 2015. The Stage 3 Safety Audit process identified a number of suggested improvements primarily to roadmarkings and traffic signs following observation of the operation of the junction since opening. These modifications are currently planned to be undertaken during the summer holidays.
- 3.8. Further changes will be necessary to the Postwick Hub junction layout following the start of construction work on the NDR earlier this year. These works formed part of the confirmed Development Consent Order for the NDR.

4. Transport for Norwich - Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) Update

- 4.1. In order to support both the development of a Western Link and revision of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) it is proposed to review the NATS strategy. The current strategy was adopted in 2004. A NATS Implementation Plan, setting out how

the strategy would be implemented on the ground, was adopted in 2010 and rolled forward in 2013.

- 4.2. The review of the strategy is proposed to be undertaken in tandem with the local plan review, which will allow activities to be co-ordinated and – where possible and appropriate – tasks to be undertaken for both the local plan and NATS review together, rather than separately. The timetable for the NATS review envisages consultation on NATS Strategy Options in late spring / early summer 2017, and full public consultation on a preferred strategy towards the end of 2017 alongside full public consultation on the local plan. The NATS strategy could then be adopted in 2018. There will also be an overlap with the timetable for the development of any preferred scheme for the Western Link Project (there is a separate report to Committee on this project).
- 4.3. A number of pieces of technical work to support the review of NATS, the review of the local plan, and development of the Norwich Western Link are likely to be required including strategic traffic / transport assessment and assessment of public transport / bus data. Currently work is ongoing to identify the full scope of such work and how these might be funded.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1. **Finance:** Funding for the Transport for Norwich (NATS) Implementation Plan will come from a variety of sources, including a Local Transport Plan allocation, funding from developers, or through the Local Growth Fund and other opportunities such as ad-hoc government funding bids. Implementation is therefore phased over 10-15 years as funding becomes available.
- 5.2. **Staff:** Staff across CES and from Mouchel and colleagues in Norwich City Council will be involved in delivering the NATS Implementation Plan. The NDR project continues to be staffed from NCC, Mott MacDonald and Balfour Beatty Civils Ltd. For specific schemes, the feasibility, consultation and scheme delivery will be met from existing resources.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The NDR is an essential element of Transport for Norwich and forms a key part of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for the Norwich Policy Area. The full delivery of the NATS implementation plan, including the NDR is essential to be able to realise the full benefits of the Plan and the growth associated with the JCS.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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