

Environment, Development and Transport Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 19 January 2018 at
10am in the Edwards Room at County Hall**

Present:

Mr M Wilby - Chair

Mr M Castle

Mr M Chenery of Horsbrugh

Mr S Clancy (Vice-Chairman)

Mr P Duigan

Mr T East

Mr S Eyre

Mr C Foulger

Mr T Jermy

Mr C Jones

Ms J Oliver

Mr T Smith

Mr B Spratt

1. Apologies and Substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mr A Grant (Mr M Chenery of Horsbrugh substituting) and Mr A White (Mr B Spratt substituting).

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2017 were agreed as an accurate record subject to an amendment to change the completion date of the Northern Distributor Road recorded at paragraph 4.1 from March 2019 to March 2018.

3. Members to Declare any Interests

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Urgent Business

- 4.1 The Chairman thanked the highways team who supported in difficult conditions during the recent storm and members of public who rallied round, helping to clear roads and helping neighbours during the storm and power cuts.

5. Public Questions

- 5.1.1 The Chairman accepted a petition from Ms Ellis and Cllr Roper about reducing the speed limit from 50mph to 40mph and further safety measures which had received 1444 signatures and letters of support.
- 5.1.2 The Chairman accepted a petition from Mr East on bus subsidies from Norman Lamb which had received 6000 signatures.
- 5.2.1 Public questions were received from Mr Clarke and Ms Ellis; see appendix A.

- 5.2.2 Ms Ellis asked a supplementary question: She felt the response showed Officers had looked at Hevingham but not Marsham; it mentioned the crossroad between Marsham and Hevingham and the safety sign. She felt there were still many accidents at this sign and asked to meet to discuss this further. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services **agreed** to arrange a meeting between petitioners, residents and Officers to explain the work which had been done here and understand petitioners' concerns and how to address them.

6. Member Questions

- 6.1 Questions were received from Cllrs Spratt, Castle and Roper; see appendix A
- 6.2 Cllr Spratt asked a supplementary question: he discussed instances of utility providers leaving signs and soil on roads for several days after completing work and the impact of this on shops and local businesses; he felt Norfolk County Council could do more to ensure this did not happen. The Chairman **agreed** to follow this up.
- 6.3 Mr Castle thanked Officers and noted that this issue highlighted the need to maintain the flow of traffic in Great Yarmouth; he hoped a protocol could be reached with the Police.
- 6.4 Cllr Roper and Mr Drake, Chairman of Stratton Strawless Council, raised a supplementary question: they reported that a 200 static home development for older people had been built on this stretch of road and felt another type of development here would not be seen as acceptable as it exited onto a national speed limit road. They pointed out it was dangerous to cross the road here after getting off the bus. The Chairman **agreed** to visit the area if requested and report back to the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services.

7. Verbal update/feedback from Members of the Committee regarding Member Working Groups or bodies that they sit on.

- 7.1 A written update was circulated from the Norwich Western Link Project Member Working Group; see Appendix B.

8. Rail Update

- 8.1 The Committee received the report providing an update on strategic rail issues for the County.
- 8.2.1 It was suggested that it may be beneficial to raise the profile of the rail service by setting up a website.
- 8.2.2 Cllr B Long was suggested for the Member representative on Community Rail Norfolk. The Chairman **proposed** nominating a representative from the Committee, and **proposed** Mr T Smith, seconded by Mr Duigan. The Committee **AGREED** with this proposal.
- 8.2.3 Concern was raised over the amount of meetings held and the risk of duplication.
- 8.2.4 It was noted that cost was a barrier to rail travel for some users.

8.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. **AGREE** findings of the review into how the county council deals with strategic rail issues, and task Norfolk Rail Group with reviewing how it operates with a view to making it a stronger, more effective group;
2. **NOMINATE** Mr T Smith as Member representative for Community Rail Norfolk;
3. **AGREE** the county council responds to the Future of Community Rail Strategy, and that this be delegated to the Executive Director in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of EDT;
4. **NOTE** progress on strategic rail issues.

9. **A47 priorities and government consultation**

9.1 The Committee considered the report providing an update on the current consultation on proposals for trunk roads. The role of Norfolk County Council was to make a case about the priorities of Norfolk to the Government who would make the final decision about which schemes to include in the trunk-road programme.

9.2.1 Discussion was held over the Thickthorn proposals from Highways England and the issues related to traffic on match days; protests had been held because people felt they were not being heard and the importance of representing the views of the public was noted.

9.2.2 Regarding the delivery date of 2020-25, it was commented that it would be key to have focus on specifics to get the best delivery for Norfolk County Council; more detail on the start date for projects was requested.

9.2.3 The Vice-Chairman spoke of the importance of the dualling of the Acle straight to support other projects in the County. He asked the Director to write to Highways England and MPs to speed up the process but the Chairman said he had recently written to all Norfolk MPs about A47 improvements focussing on RIS2 projects. The Chairman **agreed** to circulate the letter to Members of the Committee.

9.2.4 It was felt that expressway designation should be extended to more of the A47 but also recognised that some sections may not be suitable for this.

9.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. **REAFFIRM** the council's priority commitment to dualling the A47 Acle Straight to the east and Tilney/East Winch (including Hardwick Flyover at King's Lynn) in the 2020-25 trunk road programme;
2. **AGREE** that a response to the consultation be prepared, to be agreed with and sent by the chair of Environment, Development and Transport Committee;

10. **Strategic & Financial Planning 2018-19 to 2021- 22 & Revenue Budget 2018-19**

10.1.1 The Committee received the report outlining proposals to inform Norfolk County Council's decisions on council tax and contributing towards the Council setting a legal budget for 2018-19.

10.1.2 The Chairman **proposed** that the Committee recommended to Policy and Resources Committee to remove the £500,000 saving for bus subsidies and the £200,000 saving on gritting routes to be offset by the increase in Council Tax, having listened to the feedback received from the public on these proposed cuts. He thanked all who had responded to the consultation. This proposal was seconded by the Vice-

Chairman and **AGREED** by the Committee.

- 10.2.1 Members spoke in support of the proposal, but recognised the impact of the cuts which would still have to be made.
- 10.2.2 Mr Jermy reported to the Committee that Labour had encouraged members of the public to take part in the consultation and had carried out their own consultation, having felt that the public found some questions in the consultation unclear.
- 10.2.3 It was suggested that a needs led review of services may be more appropriate for identifying future budget proposals, and that proposals put to the Committee outlined not just the cut to be made, but also the wider impact of the proposals. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services clarified that it was necessary for Officers to set a legal budget with the resources available and therefore money was allocated to the highest priority services through reallocation of resources.
- 10.2.4 An extra income of £100,000 had been identified from waste services; the Chairman proposed reallocating this to reduce the proposed saving on non-safety critical highways maintenance budgets by the same amount. The Committee **AGREED** this proposal.
- 10.3 When the proposals were taken together, with 12 votes in favour and 1 abstention the Committee:
- 1) **NOTED** the new corporate priorities – Norfolk Futures – to focus on demand management, prevention and early help, and a locality focus to service provision as set out in section 2 of the report.
 - 2) **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** the service-specific budgeting issues for 2018-19 as set out in section 5;
 - 3) **CONSIDERED** and **COMMENTED** on the Committee's specific budget proposals for 2018- 19 to 2021-22 set out in Appendix 2, including the findings of public consultation in respect of the budget proposals set out in Appendices 3a-d;
 - 4) **CONSIDERED** the findings of equality and rural impact assessments, attached at Appendix 4 to this report, and in doing so, **NOTED** the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - 5) **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** any mitigating actions proposed in the equality and rural impact assessments;
 - 6) **CONSIDERED** the recommendations of the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, and:
 - a. **RECOMMENDED** to Policy and Resources Committee that the Council's budget includes an inflationary increase of 2.99% in council tax in 2018-19, within the council tax referendum limit of 3.0% for 2018-19;
 - b. **NOTED** that the Council's budget planning includes an increase in council tax of 3.0% for the Adult Social Care precept in 2018-19, meaning that no increase in the Adult Social Care precept would be levied in 2019-20.

7) **AGREED** and **RECOMMENDED** to Policy and Resources Committee the draft Committee Revenue Budget as set out in Appendix 5, but removing the £500,000 saving for bus subsidies and the £200,000 saving on gritting routes, and using the additional potential saving of £100,000 identified within the proposed DIY waste saving to reduce the proposed saving on non-safety critical highways maintenance budgets by the same amount.

For consideration by Policy and Resources Committee on 29 January 2018, to enable Policy and Resources Committee to recommend a sound, whole-Council budget to Full Council on 12 February 2018.

8) **AGREED** and **RECOMMENDED** the Capital Programme and schemes relevant to this Committee as set out in Appendix 6 to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration on 29 January 2018, to enable Policy and Resources Committee to recommend a Capital Programme to Full Council on 12 February 2018.

11. Highway capital programme and Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP)

- 11.1 The Committee received the report summarising government settlement and proposed allocations for 2018/19, successful competitive bids which secured significant additional funding from the Local Growth Fund via the LEP, and the Department for Transport's (DfT) "Challenge" and "Incentive" funds for Maintenance.
- 11.2.1 The Chairman clarified that the Parish Partnerships fund had been increased.
- 11.2.2 The Asset and Capital Programme Manager stated that a sister report on 'Highway Asset Performance' was presented annually to Committee, and would be brought to Committee in July or September 2018 with information on highway condition. This was expected to show a slight deterioration in the network in line with the agreed Asset Management Strategy. He added that results for the classified road network ('A', 'B' & 'C') 2017-18 had held its condition compared to 2016-17.
- 11.2.3 The outcome of the ongoing DfT consultation on the Major Road Network (MRN) would be reported to the Committee.
- 11.2.4 Norfolk's allocation of the DfT pothole fund 2017-18 had not been finalised by DfT. They had indicated an additional award would be announced later in the month which could be used in 2018-19. The Chairman noted the good record of pothole maintenance in Norfolk.
- 11.3 The Committee **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** that Full Council approve:
 - 1. The proposed allocations and programme for 2018/19 and indicative allocations for 2019/20/21 (as set out in Appendices A, B and C of the report).
 - 2. An additional £20m funding to invest in Highways with the allocations as set out in Paragraph 3.4.2 and Appendix D of the report, including a permanent funding solution of the Northern Distributor Road.
 - 3. The Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) for 2018/19 - 21/22.

12. Point of order

- 12.1 The Chairman took item 13, "Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing procurement", next, followed by item 12, "River Wensum Strategy Public Consultation", before returning to the running order of the agenda.

13. Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing

- The Committee received the report on the procurement process to appoint the main contractor for the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing. An amendment to the recommendations was noted: e and f shown in the report were intended to be bullet points under recommendation d; see amended recommendations below, 13.3.
- 13.1
- 13.2.1 The Chairman **proposed** that the Norwich Distributor Road working group continued over to the Third River Crossing Working Group and **nominated** Mr M Castle as its ~~Chair~~ Member. The Committee **AGREED** this proposal and nomination.
- 13.2.2 It was clarified that “social value” was a contractual requirement. Economic value of the project was built into the scheme.
- 13.2.3 Members asked what learning from the Norwich Distributor Road (NDR) project would be used to deliver this project differently. The Major Projects Manager agreed there was a lot to learn from the NDR some of which was detailed in the report. Specialists would advise throughout on the commercial side of the project.
- 13.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:
- a) **APPROVE** the contracting strategy outlined in this report;
 - b) **AGREE** the proposed approach to social value;
 - c) **AGREE** the proposed evaluation criteria set out in this report;
 - d) **AGREE** to form a Member working group to consider in more detail:
 - the evaluation model;
 - mitigation of risk;
 - g) **DELEGATE** to the Executive Director of Environmental & Community Services authority to agree the detailed evaluation criteria, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee and the Head of Procurement;
 - h) **AGREE** that the Head of Procurement may issue an Official Journal Contract Notice, which would commence the procurement exercise.

14. River Wensum Strategy Public Consultation

- 14.1.1 The Committee discussed the report outlining the main contents of the draft River Wensum Strategy and details of the recent public consultation. The document was still being consulted on therefore additional comments could still be fed back for consideration; the document was prepared by Norwich City Council.
- 14.2.1 It was **suggested** that the category “protection” should be included.
- 14.2.2 It was **suggested** that tributaries of the Wensum should be included in the strategy.
- 14.2.3 Flooding caused by less dredging and maintenance of the Wensum was noted; it was **suggested** the Environmental Agency should dedicate a budget to dredging.
- 14.2.4 The Western Link plan was not included in the document as it was outside the scope of the River Wensum strategy and its boundaries. The Chairman **suggested** it should be included.
- 14.2.5 The Vice-Chairman **suggested** the boundary of the Strategy should be expanded to include Taverham, Ringland and Costessy.

14.2.6 The Head of Environment **agreed** to feed the Committee's comments back to Norwich City Council.

14.3 The Committee **AGREED** to strongly endorse the vision and objectives of the draft River Wensum Strategy and to support the ongoing partnership working, but felt Norwich City Council should look beyond the current boundary to get best value for the Strategy.

15. Review of Norwich Highways Agency Agreement

15.1 The Committee received the report detailing a review of the performance of the Highways Agency Agreement.

15.2.1 The Transport for Norwich/City Agency Manager reported that, according to data from the Business Improvement District, in Norwich over Christmas 2017 there was a 3% increase in footfall, levels of cycling had increased by 40% and retail vacancy rates were below the national average. Norwich was performing better than national and local trends; use of public transport had increased by 0.5 million and a new carpark had opened in 2017 to accommodate the increase in visitors.

15.2.2 The Transport for Norwich/City Agency Manager confirmed that reviews were carried out regularly and Cllrs could feed in to these. It was felt that the capital fund was the most appropriate source of funds for safety cameras; surplus income from cameras came to the Council budget.

15.2.3 The Committee **AGREED** that option A presented at paragraph 1.2 of the report was the most preferable.

15.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. **NOTE** and **COMMENT** on the details of the reviewed of the Norwich Highways Agency Agreement, **AGREE** not to invoke the termination, but **EXTEND** the current Agreement for one year to March 2020, to allow the details of the new Agreement to be fully developed;
2. **AGREE** that a report comes back to this Committee early in 2019 outlining a proposed new Norwich Highways Agency Agreement that would include details of the scope for financial savings.

16. The London Plan: Consultation

16.1 The Committee considered the report outlining The London Plan and outcomes flowing from it which had the potential to impact on economic growth in Norfolk.

16.2.1 It was queried whether London based offices would be likely to move to Norfolk, which would support Norfolk's economy. It was agreed that the Plan needed to recognise and support the potential relocation of employment (particularly office-based employment) out of London to places like Norwich, which had the potential for employment growth. The Principal Planner **agreed** to include this point in the response.

16.2.2 The importance of infrastructure for attracting professionals to Norfolk was noted, for example trains and broadband. It was agreed that the Plan needed to recognise that in the areas outside London which would assist in relieving the growth pressures on

the Capital, that would be a need for improvements to both local and strategic infrastructure (in these areas) particularly in relation to transport infrastructure (i.e. road and rail).

- 16.3 The Committee **AGREE** the comments in the report as the basis for the County Council's response to the draft London Plan.

17. Performance Management

- 17.1 The Committee received the report reporting performance on an exception basis using a report card format.
- 17.2.1 A concern was raised that the budget management information did not contain enough detail.
- 17.2.2 The importance of indicators around landowners was raised, and that some of these were not being met.
- 17.2.3 The update for August and September related to buses was queried. The Senior Analyst confirmed that this measure was subject to ongoing review and would be available in time for the next meeting. Data extraction and calculation was also being reviewed to have more in depth data in future.
- 17.3 The Committee **REVIEWED** and **COMMENTED** on the performance data, information and analysis presented in the vital sign report cards.

18. Risk Management

- 18.1 The Committee reviewed the report providing information from the latest risk register as at January 2018, following the latest review conducted in December 2017. Members were advised to put forward a recommendation to Audit Committee to be taken at corporate level by Audit Committee and Policy and Resources Committee.
- 18.2.1 It was queried whether the budget of £121m was slipping. The Finance Business Partner for Community and Environmental Services reported that the budget was being reviewed and there was no indication of pressure on this budget at that time.
- 18.2.2 The Risk Management Officer confirmed that the 2 conditions in appendix D were mutually inclusive and both were conditions of the corporate risk.
- 18.3 The Committee **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED**:
- a) the new risk RM14336 - Failure to construct and deliver the Great Yarmouth 3rd River Crossing (3RC) within agreed budget (£121m) and agreed timescales (construction completed early 2023), which was reported by exception (paragraph 2.2 & Appendix A), and changes to other departmental risks (Appendix E);
 - b) that the recommended mitigating actions identified for the new risk RM14336 in Appendix A were appropriate;
 - c) putting forward a recommendation to the January 2018 Audit Committee that risk RM14336 was managed both on the departmental Environment, Development and Transport Committee risk register and the corporate risk register, given its corporate significance;
 - d) the revised risk scores for the Norwich Distributor Road risk (RM14248),

following sign off of the revised Norwich Distributor Road budget at the November 2017 Full Council meeting.

19. Finance monitoring

- 19.1 The Committee received the report outlining information on the budget position for services reporting to Environment, Development & Transport Committee for 2017-18.
- 19.2.1 The anticipated cost pressure for gritting for 2017-18 was queried. The Assistant Director of Highways reported that the number of gritting actions per year were monitored and the budget was based on a projected average; 48 gritting actions had been carried out so far, which was above average, and this would be constantly reviewed to advise the budget setting process. In the busiest year when 159 gritting actions were carried out, the extra money needed was maintained within the departmental budget through a reserve fund held for these situations.
- 19.2.2 The lack of variances shown within the budget was queried and concern raised that this did not indicate to the Committee an accurate picture of the budget. The Finance Business Partner for Community and Environmental Services clarified that the actuals to date differed from the net budget shown due to costs managed by highways which were recharged through to Children's and Adults Services, which did not yet show in the actual figures; some budget lines would show fluctuations in spend due to the nature of some areas of the service.
- 19.2.3 The Chairman suggested that members who wanted more clarity on the budget arranged to meet with the Finance Business Partner for Community and Environmental Services for more detail or to arrange a briefing.
- 19.2.4 The Finance Business Partner for Community and Environmental Services **agreed** to hold a briefing for Members and to review the level of detail in future reports.

20. Forward plan

- 20.1 The Committee reviewed and **NOTED** the Forward Plan for 2018 and delegated decisions taken by Officers.

21. Any Other Business

- 21.1 Mrs J Oliver updated the Committee that the Waste Project had met and a report would be brought to the Committee in March 2018.

The meeting closed at 12:15

**Mr M Wilby, Chairman,
Environment, Development and Transport Committee**



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MEMBER/PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE : 19 JANUARY 2018

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

5.1 Question from Mr Anthony Clarke

What system does Norfolk County Council have in place for:

Recording reports of surface defects (ie pot holes) on the Highways in Norfolk; all media to be included (post, verbal, telephone, text, email, online forms, apps such as "Fill that Hole", "Fix my Street", etc).

Response by Chairman of EDT Committee

Norfolk County Council uses an integration of two systems to record the reporting of surface defects, supported by an online front end. The two main systems are: the Microsoft Dynamics Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which records the defect and the customer details of the person reporting (if they wish to be kept informed of progress); and Mayrise, by Yotta, which manages the workflow and allocation through the Area Highways teams. We do not support any third party applications such as Fill that Hole or Fix my Street, and although we do receive information from these systems we do not provide feedback.

5.2 Question from Mr Anthony Clarke

What systems and time table does Norfolk County Council have in place for:

Investigating reports received as described above.

Response by Chairman of EDT Committee

Mayrise is the Highways Management System used by Norfolk County Council, which receives defect reports through an interface with our Microsoft Dynamics Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Defects are automatically allocated to the Area Highways team for investigation and prioritisation.

We aim to look at reported defects within three working days, although the response will vary according to the location (i.e. main road or estate) and type of defect reported. Reports which are considered to be an emergency are dealt with as quickly as possible.

5.3 Question from Ms Anna Ellis

From January 2012 to May 2017, the A140 between Hevingham and Marsham had 62 reported traffic accidents including 36 personal injury (3 were fatal and 5 serious). Furthermore there have been many unreported accidents and near misses.

A petition has been prepared requesting reduction in speed limit from 50mph to 40mph and further safety measures with 1444 signatures and letters of support from Hevingham, Marsham, Stratton Strawless and Hainford Parish Councils, the local churches and many businesses and farms.

Will the committee agree to a meeting between ourselves, officers and our Councillor to review the research and explore possibilities of a speed limit reduction and improved safety through our villages.

Response by Chairman of EDT Committee

The County Council uses the road accident data recorded by the police. This is recorded in detail in a nationally consistent way and includes only those accidents where a person is injured. They are classified as fatal, serious or slight depending upon the severity of injuries sustained. It is generally accepted that for every accident involving injury reported to the police, there are likely to be many damage-only accidents which go unrecorded.

According to the Police accident data on A140 within the parishes of Hevingham and Marsham, for the period January 2012 to May 2017, there were 21 personal injury accidents recorded, of which 3 were fatalities, 8 were serious and 10 were slight. Taking in to account the level of traffic, this gives an accident rate about 1.5 times what would be expected for this type of road. However, more notable is the proportion of fatal and serious injuries, which at 52% is considerably higher than expected. This means that when accidents occur here, the outcome for road users tends to be worse.

The majority of accidents, particularly the more serious ones, occurred within the more built up length of Hevingham. The County Council has identified this and carried out an Accident Investigation Study in 2017. This has recommended the implementation of a lower 40mph speed limit on the A140 through Hevingham, supported by Vehicle Activated Signing and new village 'gateway signing'. It is anticipated that this safety scheme will be implemented in 2018.

In addition, a safety scheme was introduced at the A140/Buxton Road crossroads between Marsham and Hevingham in 2016. This involved Vehicle Activated signing which only triggers when a car is waiting within the side roads and a car is approaching at high speed on A140. This helps keep the message 'fresh' and alerts A140 drivers to higher risk situations.

The above measures will improve road safety on A140. However, Officers will continue to monitor the safety record here, along with across the county as a whole and take further action as necessary. In view of the proposed measures, a meeting at this time is not considered necessary.

6. MEMBER QUESTIONS

6.1 Question from Cllr Bev Spratt

Can NCC monitor roadworks more efficiently to eliminate unnecessary hold ups on Norfolk roads?

Response by Chairman of EDT Committee

The Norfolk Permit Scheme requires all works promoters to obtain a permit prior to working on the highway for their planned works. A similar arrangement exists for more urgent immediate or emergency works. This provides a platform where work can be scrutinised and additional requirements added in order to minimise the disruption caused by works undertaken by the County Council and the utilities. This helps Norfolk meet its duties to co-ordinate works and to minimise congestion. The permit scheme is self-funding and has delivered a big improvement in the way that works are planned and delivered which has provided a benefit to the public.

In addition to the permit scheme, all work is subject to random inspection. The results of these inspections form part of our performance monitoring of all works promoters and is shared both regionally and nationally. These inspections help to identify what additional measures can be taken on site in order to help minimise any disruption being caused. Where defects are found they are formally logged with the promoter and remedial work enforced in order to minimise any repair required from the public purse. Norfolk is able to charge for these inspections which helps to make them self-funding.

The permit scheme and inspections are underpinned by the way in which promoters share data of their works. Norfolk publishes this data in the public domain using 'roadworks.org'. Businesses, like bus operators widely use this information. In addition, Highways Area staff will also respond to and investigate complaints received from the public regarding roadworks.

6.2 Question from Cllr Mick Castle

Following a false alarm of a child in the water last Saturday Yarmouth's Breydon Bridge was unnecessarily closed causing traffic chaos in the Town at a time when there are major road works in train. Please can Norfolk County Council renew pressure on the uniformed services to adopt a protocol to keep traffic moving whenever possible given the adverse

effect such unnecessary closures have on the local economy and the public. A search of the water was possible in this case without a bridge closure.

Response by Chairman of EDT Committee

Norfolk County Council works closely with the emergency services. All parties already work to an agreed protocol in relation to the emergency response to road traffic incidents. This protocol is essential so that there is full understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities during road traffic incidents. Although specific to Norfolk, the protocol is based on national best practice.

An essential part of this protocol includes the over-riding priority to preserve life. It is also already written into the protocol to minimise risk to the public on the roads affected and to minimise congestion caused by any road incident.

In addition to the protocol, County Council Officers also attend quarterly meetings with the emergency services, during which best practice is shared and feedback is provided on incidents. In light of Cllr Castle's question, we will ensure that the Breydon Bridge incident (on Highways England's Trunk Road network) is raised at the next meeting.

6.3 Question from Cllr Daniel Roper

Safety on the A140 north of Norwich is a crucial issue for residents and businesses within my division. A petition is presented today by residents of Hevingham of 1400 signatures calling for a speed limit review and additional safety measures on the A140 through their village.

The Parish Council in neighbouring Stratton Strawless is preparing a similar petition highlighting the national speed limit on the A140 through their parish and requesting a review.

Traffic speed through Stratton Strawless directly impacts on neighbouring villages. Therefore, my question is whether consideration of the speed limit and safety through Stratton Strawless can take place alongside any work to resolve the issues in Hevingham.

Response by Chairman of EDT Committee

When setting speed limits, Norfolk County Council applies its Speed Management Strategy, which is closely related to current Department for Transport guidance contained in LTN1/2013. A key element to both documents is that speed limits must be self-explaining and help to reinforce to drivers the appropriate speed at which to travel. To artificially set a speed limit too low can actually cause more safety problems as the difference in speed between the fastest and average speed of drivers increases. It can also lead to a lack of respect for speed limits in

general. Frontage development is one of the most important factors in setting speed limits as it changes the highway environment very clearly and reinforces to drivers of the need to reduce speed. On A140 at Stratton Strawless, the road environment is entirely rural with no built frontage development. As a result, the existing national speed limit is still appropriate.

With the speed limit being correct for the highway environment, the County Council would only consider further reductions if the accident rate was higher than expected. Thankfully, according to the Police accident data on A140 within the parish of Stratton Strawless, there have been 2 personal injury accidents recorded in the last 5 years (1 serious, 1 slight). Given the level of traffic on A140, two recorded accidents represents a relatively good accident record. Therefore, the County Council would not propose to reduce the current national speed limit, but the accident record here will be monitored, as we do across the whole county, and take further action as necessary.

Norwich Western Link Project- Update for EDT Committee from Working Group (for 19 November 2017)

Further to previous meetings of the Norwich Western Link Project (NWL) Member Working Group and the report provided at the 20 October EDT Committee meeting, a meeting was held on 8 November and more recently on January 2018 to provide an update for the Member Group. The following provides a brief summary of the most recent meeting:

1. Highways England's (HE) latest progress for the A47 proposals from North Tuddenham to Easton was discussed. The project team outlined details of the most recent meeting with HE and that further monthly meetings are planned. Topics discussed with HE include the scope of modelling work completed and potential for utilisation of the same transport model for each project; how communication can be improved (although monthly meetings will now help this); the scope of the design proposals and feedback; and more scope going forwards to improve interaction between technical teams. The implications of the potential designation of an 'expressway' was discussed.
2. The Group received a more detailed update on the next steps for the project. WSP provided details of the specialists involved and the work required during 2018 to complete the necessary corridor and route assessment work using the Department for Transport's sifting tool. Discussion included an update on the alignment and progress of the Orsted off-shore energy cable route, and the need to consider this as part of the route assessment work being undertaken. The Group set out their expectations regarding the need for a lean process to deliver the project, but understood also the need to carry out a thorough and robust assessment of options.
3. The Group received a more detailed update from the delivery team on proposals developed as part of the communications plan for the project. Work completed to date includes engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. A range of replies have been received setting out support for the project and the Group asked for the team to continue to chase up any key stakeholders who have not yet responded. It was also confirmed that meetings have been offered with environmental groups. The Group suggested that the team should also contact hauliers and other delivery businesses such as OHL, Yodel, Hermes, Post Office, etc. The Group also agreed that letters should be sent to each parish/town council.

A planned consultation starting after the local elections in May (avoiding purdah) was discussed. The Group provided feedback on the early draft questionnaire document. The consultation will be available via postal and on-line formats and the use of an electronic system was discussed, as it has proved beneficial on other projects to ensure a wider spread of engagement and interaction. The Group felt that a good start has been made on the necessary and important consultation and stakeholder engagement process for the project.

4. The Local Plan Review process was briefly discussed. Consultation is currently ongoing - until March 2018. There was little new information relating to the Food Hub/Enterprise Zone, however it was considered that there is a good level of interest from companies considering locating there.
5. The next local group meeting (with parish council representatives) is planned for 22 February and the agenda items proposed for this were discussed with the Member Group. This next meeting will provide an opportunity for discussion on the corridor and route appraisal process and details regarding the planned consultation. It will also include a detailed overview of the transport modelling process. It is expected that HE will also attend this next meeting.

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