



Norfolk County Council

Joint Committee for Transforming Cities Funds Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 February 2021 at 2pm on Microsoft Teams (virtual meeting)

Present:

Cllr Martin Wilby (Chairman)

Norfolk County Council

Cllr Barry Stone (Vice-Chairman)

Norfolk County Council

Cllr Lana Hempsall

Broadland District Council

Peter Joyner

New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Cllr Kay Mason-Billig

South Norfolk District Council

Cllr Mike Stonard

Norwich City Council

Cllr Ian Stutely

Norwich City Council

Cllr Brian Watkins

Norfolk County Council

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Danny Douglas for Cllr Steve Morpew Norfolk County Council

Also Present:

Hollie Adams

Committee Officer, Democratic Services, Norfolk County Council

Alex Cliff

Highway Network and Digital Innovation Manager, Norfolk County Council

Durga Goutam

Senior Engineer, Major Project Team, Community and Environmental Services, Norfolk County Council

Stuart Payne

Associate (WSP), Community and Environmental Services, Norfolk County Council

David Wardale

Project Engineer, Community and Environmental Services, Norfolk County Council

Jeremy Wiggin

Transport for Norwich Manager, Community and Environmental Services, Norfolk County Council

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Steve Morpew (Cllr Danny Douglas substituting).

2. Minutes of last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

2.2 Matters arising from the minutes

- The Transport for Norwich Manager gave an update on the projects discussed at the last meeting which had now gone out to consultation. Consultation had finished on three of the schemes, but the Cromer Road scheme was still out to consultation. The outcome of all of the consultations would be brought back to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.

- Cllr Watkins raised the South Park Avenue and Unthank Road Scheme discussed at the last meeting; since then he had learned that charges for parking in Eaton Park were being considered. He was concerned that this may encourage car users to park on South Park Avenue and adjoining roads. He suggested that officers took this into consideration before taking the scheme forward. The Transport for Norwich Manager noted this and suggested that when the report on this scheme was brought back to Committee later in the year, commentary on potential introduction of charges could be included for discussion. If any significant changes were made before this time, officers would hold further discussions. Cllr Stonard stated that there would be a thorough review of the impact of parking charges in Eaton Park before taking any decision, including possible displacement of parked cars and whether parking restrictions on nearby roads would be helpful.
- Cllr Douglas raised the discussion in the minutes about concerns raised by residents about traffic queuing into Town Close School and asked whether officers had written to the school. The Transport for Norwich Manager replied that due to the Covid-19 lockdown there were few students attending the school, however a dialogue was ongoing with the school to ensure these issues were addressed. Cllr Hemsall noted that school travel plans had been disrupted during the pandemic; few students were currently in school because of the lockdown, and those who were were less likely to use public transport which might cause a temporary increase in school traffic.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Items received as urgent business

- 4.1 No urgent business was discussed.

5. Grapes Hill Roundabout

- 5.1 The Joint Committee received the report outlining proposed highway improvement works for the Grapes Hill roundabout in Norwich.

- 5.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- It was proposed to link into and extend the existing shared cycle facility on Convent Road to Unthank Road. Officers had looked at ways to widen this but there was not enough space for it to be a segregated provision. A significant increase in the width of the off-road facility could only be made by taking out a traffic lane.
- The Highway Network and Digital Innovation Manager responded to a query that traffic modelling for Grapes Hill showed a 40 second improvement to journey times in both directions in the morning and evening peak which could allow greater capacity for more traffic.
- It was noted that traffic signalling was being kept on Chapel Field North, whereas signalling was being taken out of other routes. The Highway Network and Digital Innovation Manager clarified that this was because on the Chapel Field North approach to Grapes Hill Roundabout, two approaches merged into one. Through removal of all other signals on the roundabout the signals on the Chapel Field North approach would have greater control to manage traffic demand, and the

timings would adjust accordingly. After the signals, the ability for motorists to turn onto the roundabout would depend on traffic levels. Modelling had shown that any increased traffic on the roundabout would not adversely affect this junction.

- A member asked if a review of highway improvements to stop rat running through Willow Lane, Gas Hill and Wellington Lane could be added to the consultation. The Transport for Norwich Manager replied that there was scope for a wider review of traffic issues in that part of the city to be included in a consultation later in the year, with proposals on Transforming Cities schemes brought forward along with scheme funded through other mechanisms to be brought to the Joint Committee.
- The application put forward by Temple Bar to change their parking to a pub garden and block off the route into the carpark from Grapes Hill was raised. Officers were asked to look into including the cost of blocking off the turn into the pub carpark as part of this scheme, as it was cost prohibitive for the business. The Transport for Norwich Manager **agreed** to look into this.
- Improving the general traffic conditions could lead to an increase in people driving, however, officers were also looking to deliver a behaviour change programme in partnership with Active Norfolk to encourage more people to use active modes and travel more sustainably across Norfolk.
- A Member raised concerns about people using a shortcut through Pottergate, Wellington Lane and Cow lane, causing delays while waiting to turn onto Cleveland Road and suggested that measures to mitigate this should be looked into. Another Member felt the rat running here may not be as bad as suggested.
- A Member asked whether a Dutch style roundabout had been considered for the Grapes Hill Roundabout, noting the accident rate for cyclists on other types of urban roundabouts. The Transport for Norwich Manager replied that the safety team had audited and were happy with all proposals. It was felt that a Dutch style roundabout was not appropriate here due to the traffic flow, and what was proposed was the most efficient method for this junction.
- It was confirmed that Exchange Street was being looked at through the active travel fund
- Norwich Cycle Campaign had been involved in planning for the scheme; they had raised concerns about the cycle filter lane on Convent Road and therefore proposals had been built up around this to mitigate this loss as much as possible with the facility to bring cyclists around the roundabout off-road. They were supportive of the overall proposals to increase facilities for cyclists.

5.3 The Joint Committee **AGREED to PROCEED** to public consultation on the proposals for Grapes Hill roundabout as shown on the plan contained in Appendix A of the report.

6. Norwich Railway Station

6.1.1 The Joint Committee received the report outlining improvement works affecting the Norwich Rail Station, Thorpe Road and Foundry Bridge junction in Norwich.

6.1.2 A potential pick up and drop off location on Lower Clarence Road was also proposed but not shown in Appendix A of the report. A revised version of this appendix was shown to the Joint Committee and is also attached at Appendix A of these minutes.

6.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- It was noted that Foundry Bridge was narrow, limiting measures that could be put in place here for pedestrians or cyclists. A Member suggested a footbridge could

be built alongside the bridge to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. The Transport for Norwich Manager replied that many options had been looked into for Foundry Bridge however for such a project significant funding would be required, and therefore this was therefore an aspirational option.

- Officers were asked whether the proposals would be complementary to Greater Anglia's proposals for Norwich Station; the Transport for Norwich Manager confirmed that officers were working closely with Greater Anglia and plans had been shared between Greater Anglia and Norfolk County Council.
- Greater Anglia were planning to make more accessible parking on the station forecourt and provide a dedicated drop off area and discussions were underway about improving the crossing areas and providing signage for onward travel. Norfolk County Council were also looking at providing Beryl Bikes at the station.
- The timing of Greater Anglia's works was not clear at that time, but contractors would work closely with them to ensure all work was as seamless as possible.
- It was discussed that there should be good links in place between the rail station, bus station and airport.
- No physical changes were proposed to the existing signalised crossing from the railway station to Riverside, but the crossing technology would be reviewed to ensure it was the most efficient.
- The gradient of the existing ramp from the station up to Lower Clarence Road was noted as being very steep and being difficult to use for people with disabilities, mobility difficulties or with prams. The Transport for Norwich Manager confirmed that this came under Greater Anglia's changes for the carpark, and they were looking at putting in steps down to the carpark either alongside or as a replacement to the ramp. Greater Anglia had looked at the option of replacing the existing ramp with a DDA (disability discrimination act) compliant ramp but concluded that the cost was prohibitive. The Transport for Norwich Manager **agreed** to feedback concerns about accessibility to this carpark to Greater Anglia.
- A discussion was held about the long wait time to cross and the narrow pavements at the traffic lights at Thorpe Road, near Prezzo. The Project Engineer confirmed that it was proposed to widen crossing points around this junction, remove the central island on Riverside Road to make crossing easier, and remove street furniture to make more space for pedestrians.
- The proposals for Chalk Hill Road and St Matthews Road to become one way was noted, and the potential impact on residents; the Transport for Norwich Manager confirmed that the view of residents would be gathered from as wide an area as possible and the view of rail users would also be sought.
- Officers were happy to look into ways of engaging with people and how to take forward changes to Foundry Bridge, however it was noted that this was not part of the proposals going to consultation at that time.
- A discussion was held about the SOS bus stopping in the bus stop outside Budgens on Rose Lane, reducing capacity for buses to stop by 50% on Friday and Saturday nights. A dedicated space on Eastbourne Place had been suggested for the SOS bus which met their needs, however there was antisocial behaviour here and they were not able to take up the offer. A dedicated power supply was offered in their original stop, but they did not take up this offer; it was therefore suggested that they be liaised with again.
- The business case to Government included figures on modal shift and changes in car and bus usage on a programme level with all schemes combined. It was harder to look at on a scheme by scheme basis, but it was possible to include detail on this in future reports. Historically, traffic modelling had been focussed on vehicles however new technology had been deployed across Norfolk to gather

data on pedestrian and cyclist behaviour. From this work, Norfolk County Council had been awarded Innovate UK funding to explore this in more depth.

- there were plans to increase housing on and surround Lower Clarence Road and concerns were raised about the potential of increased traffic caused by the proposed separate drop off and pick up point here.

- 6.3 The Joint Committee **AGREED to** proceed to public consultation on the proposals for Norwich rail station as shown on the plan contained in Appendix A of the report.

The Meeting Closed at 15:40

**Cllr Martin Wilby, Chair,
Joint Committee for Transforming Cities Funds**



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

