

# Environment Development and Transport Committee

Item No.

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Transport for Norwich (TfN) and Northern Distributor Road (NDR) update report</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>15 September 2017</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Tom McCabe, Executive Director of Environment and Community Services</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> The Norwich Area Transport Strategy (NATS) Implementation Plan ('Transport for Norwich' - TfN) includes cycling infrastructure, pedestrian and public transport enhancements and traffic management in the city centre and suburbs, as well as delivery of the NDR.	

## Executive summary

This report provides an update on progress made on delivering the TfN programme of works since the last update report in July 2016.

### 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 (TfN) plan**
- ii) **Committee is asked to note the latest update on progress of the NDR project and agree to the phased opening of sections of the NDR as set out in this report (section 3).**

## 1. Transport for Norwich (TfN) – update on scheme delivery

1.1. This report provides an update on key schemes that have been delivered or are being developed since the last update of July 2016 ([Link](#)).

### 1.2. Cycle City Ambition Grant

The programme of work on the second phase of the Cycle City Ambition programme has continued. The second wave of funding for the project saw Norwich City Council secure an additional £8.4m of funding to make further improvements to cycle routes across the city. Two of the other seven cycle routes to benefit from this grant include the Yellow Pedalway between Norwich International Airport and Lakenham and the Blue Pedalway from Sprowston to Wymondham. Key schemes delivered during 2016/17 were cycle and pedestrian improvements along A11 Newmarket Road between Unthank Road and the Outer Ring Road and improved cycling facilities along Hall Road.

1.3. Delivery of improvements to cycle infrastructure continue into 2017/18, with key schemes being delivered along A11 Newmarket Road between the Outer Ring Road and Hannover Road, St Crispins, Eaton/Cringleford, Mile Cross and Brazengate.

### 1.4. Local Growth Fund (LGF)

Significant capital funding has been secured from the New Anglia Local

Enterprise Partnership (LEP) through the Growth Deal, which aims to boost the region's skills, improve transport and infrastructure and help small businesses to grow. Growth Deal funding has been used to deliver significant changes to traffic flow in Norwich city centre where traffic was removed from Westlegate to improve pedestrian and cycle connections with the rest of the city centre and the north-south vehicle access has been simplified by making Golden Ball Street two-way. Westlegate also saw improvements to its streetscape with the installation of new paving, planters and seating.

- 1.5. Work has continued on developing the new transport interchange facility at Roundhouse Way and good progress has been made in terms of preparing works for the delivery of significant cycle improvements between Wymondham and Hethersett later in 2017/18.
- 1.6. Feasibility and design work is underway for transport improvements to Prince of Wales Road / Rose Lane, with the aim of undertaking consultation on this early 2018. Additionally, attention is being focussed on options to improve the Newmarket Road / Outer Ring Road junction.
- 1.7. **Sustainable Travel Transition Fund**

Norfolk County Council (NCC) secured £440k revenue funding from Department for Transport (DfT) for 2016/17 through the Sustainable Travel Transition Fund, which was used to promote increased levels of walking and cycling in Norwich and Great Yarmouth. This funding was used to deliver a wide range of activities, which included personalised journey planning for residents in Norwich, setting up a cycle loan scheme and regular 'Parkride' events, providing cycle riding and maintenance training and delivering a number of walking and cycling festivals that several thousand people attended. Following on from this, NCC then secured a further £1.488m revenue funding from DfT for 17/18-19/20 through the Access Fund, again to promote walking and cycling in Norwich and Great Yarmouth.
- 1.8. **Key transport statistics**

Since 2013, the number of cycle journeys recorded across the Norwich cycle network has increased by around 45%, from 100,000 to about 145,000. This information comes from a series of automated counters distributed across Norwich that are aimed at measuring the result of investment in cycle infrastructure and activities to encourage cycling. These figures only represent those recorded from counters – the overall number of people cycling across Norwich as a whole will be considerably higher. Just under 9% of workers in Norwich cycle to work, which places Norwich as the 8<sup>th</sup> highest local authority area in the UK (Office for National Statistics, Census 2011).
- 1.9. City centre footfall is measured by the Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) from two automated counters in the city centre. For 2016, this showed an increase of 2.6% on the previous year. A typical footfall figure reported for a single month by these two counters is just over 2m. This footfall trend in Norwich is bucking the East of England and national trend, which saw overall decreases of 0.6% and 1.1% respectively.
- 1.10. Bus operator, First, has reported a half-a-million increase in passenger journeys over the last 12 months in Norfolk, with 75% of this increase in Norwich. They attributed part of this increase to the city centre traffic improvement works, which they report has increased bus service punctuality and given people more confidence in the public transport network. To support these figures released by First, bus operator Sanders Coaches reported an additional 100,000 passenger journeys on their rural services into Norwich from North Norfolk.

### 1.11. **Review of the Highways Agency Agreement**

The Highways Agency Agreement and delivery of the TfN programme are separate entities but are closely linked to each other in terms of their impacts on the city.

1.12. The current Highways Agency Agreement is dated 19 September 2014 and unless either the County Council or City Council give not less than 12 months' notice, the Agreement will expire on 31 March 2019. If by 1 April 2018 neither party has given notice, the agreement will be renewed for a period of 5 years from 1 April 2019.

1.13. Officers are currently carrying out an in-depth review of the Highways Agency Agreement and recommendations will be reported back to this Committee in spring 2018. The review is aimed at ensuring the structure for delivery is fit for purpose and continues to provide value for money.

## **2. Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) - update**

2.1. The current NATS strategy was adopted in 2010 and rolled forward in 2013. A review of the NATS strategy and Implementation Plan was started in early-2017 with the aim of focussing on what NATS has delivered since the last review, how relevant are the NATS policies and what issues have emerged since the last review?

2.2. It is recognised that the delivery of NATS has been successful to date and that the intention of this review is not start again and come up with a brand new strategy and Implementation Plan. Instead, this review is very much focussed with fine tuning what already exists and updating as appropriate.

2.3. The review of the NATS strategy is being undertaken in tandem with the local plan review, which will allow activities to be co-ordinated where appropriate. The timetable for the NATS review envisages consultation on high level transport issues during Autumn 2017 alongside public consultation on the local plan, with a more detailed consultation exercise on an updated strategy and implementation plan being undertaken Spring 2018, with a view to being adopted late 2018.

2.4. A number of pieces of technical work to support the review of NATS are likely to be required including an analysis of access into Norwich and updated traffic modelling. The scope of this work is currently being identified.

## **3. NDR Update**

3.1. A construction progress update report was presented to this Committee on 21 June 2017 ([Link](#)). This report provides a further update on the potential timing of the opening of the NDR and seeks approval to phase the delivery of the NDR construction such that sections of the road are opened in stages.

3.2. The 21 June report set out the potential to open sections of the NDR in phases, as follows:

1. A1067 Fakenham Road to A140 Cromer Road by the end of October/early November 2017.
2. A140 Cromer Road to A1151 Wroxham Road by the end of December 2017.
3. A1151 Wroxham Road to Postwick junction at A47 by the end of March 2018.

These dates remain the current target and therefore consideration needs to be given to the effects on the local road network of opening sections 1 & 2 above

early and in advance of the full scheme being completed (section 3).

- 3.3. Modelling of the network has been undertaken to assess the effects of opening section 1, and then sections 1 & 2. The main findings are:

Opening Section 1 (late October/early November 2017)

- Traffic does make use of the partially opened NDR and doesn't go through Drayton, with the model indicating a similar level of reduction as compared to the fully completed NDR.
- There is a change (increase) of traffic through Weston Longville that is consistent with the full NDR scenario.
- Significant reduction is found at Reepham Rd to the west of Drayton Lane, which shows that traffic is rerouting and using the partial NDR instead of Reepham Road.
- However, further south on Reepham Road, traffic flow increases notably to the east of Hall Lane, with a corresponding decrease on the A140 Holt/Cromer Road. This is mainly considered to be due to delays on inbound traffic at two signal junctions on the A140 Holt/Cromer Road near the airport which appears to cause traffic to re-route onto Reepham Road, with the morning peak period being the worst.
- On the NDR itself, this partial opening is predicted to generate around 9,600 two way AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic) flows near the A1067 and around 12,000 near the A140. These levels are lower than those expected when the full NDR is opened, with flows then increased to 12,000 and 22,000 respectively.

Opening Sections 1 & 2 (December 2017)

This modelling was undertaken to assess localised impacts and take account of the issues identified above for Section 1. The results show that the opening of sections 1 & 2 indicates a switch of traffic from the existing outer ring road to the NDR. Flows on the NDR remain lower than when the full scheme is opened.

Modelling analysis tested options including re-configuring the timing of the traffic signals on the A140 Cromer Road and at the Boundary junction (A140/Ring Road). This shows a positive effect on the level of traffic on Reepham Road.

3.4. Recommendations

The assessments of opening Section 1 by the end of October/early November 2017 and then Sections 1 & 2 by end of December 2017 will generate some localised traffic issues, particularly at Weston Longville and Reepham Road. However, it is considered that the introduction of traffic calming within Weston Longville will help to discourage traffic using that route. The traffic calming is due to be introduced during October. The short term increase in traffic on Reepham Road can be mitigated by amending traffic signal timings on the A140 Cromer Road and at the Outer Ring Road boundary junction.

- 3.5. With the mitigation measures in place and with further monitoring and evaluation during the temporary period until the full NDR is completed and opened, it is considered viable to open the NDR in sections as set out above. This will ensure that the road is opened as soon as sections become available and provides a balanced position taking into account potential criticism that may be made about the road being largely completed but not opened.

## **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1. Funding for TfN comes from a variety of sources, including NCC funding from Local Transport Plan, developer contributions, through the Local Growth Fund and other opportunities such as government funding bids. Delivery is phased

over 10-15 years to reflect the availability of funding.

- 4.2. A confidential report setting out the financial position of the NDR was presented to EDT Committee on 21 June 2017. The reason for confidentiality is that the ability to manage the difficult and commercially sensitive dialogue necessary with the contractor in the coming weeks and months would be significantly compromised. Further updates will be provided to the NDR Member Group and Committee in due course.

## 5. Issues, risks and innovation

- 5.1. Following discussion at the June Committee around the NDR risk it was agreed that the risk rating for the project to achieve delivery within budget should be amended to red to reflect a likely increase in costs. The current risk score has been amended to 25. There have been no changes to the agreed risk score since the June Committee. See Appendix A for further details.

## 6. Background

- 6.1. EDT Committee 8 July 2016 – Follow this [Link](#) (agenda item 8, page 19)  
EDT Committee 21 June 2017 – Follow this [Link](#) (agenda item 16, page 124)

## Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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