



**Joint Committee for Transport for Norwich
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 November 2021 at 2pm
on Microsoft Teams (virtual meeting)**

Present:

Cllr Martin Wilby (Chair)
Cllr Barry Stone (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Emma Corlett
Cllr Kay Mason-Billig
Cllr Mike Stonard
Cllr Ian Stutely
Cllr Brian Watkins

Representing:

Norfolk County Council
Norfolk County Council
Norfolk County Council
South Norfolk District Council
Norwich City Council
Norwich City Council
Norfolk County Council

Officers Present:

Alexander Cliff
David Cumming
Richard Doleman
Durga Goutam
William Jones
Jonathan Hall
Jiaqi Ren
Stuart Payne
Jonathan Taylor
Jeremy Wiggin

Title:

Highway Network Digital Innovation Manager
Strategic Transport Manager
Principal Planner
Senior Engineer - Major Project Team
Project Engineer
Committee Officer
Project Engineer
Project Engineer
Project Engineer
Transport for Norwich Manager, Norfolk County Council

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Sue Lawn. Peter Joyner was also absent.

2. Minutes of last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Items received as urgent business

4.1 Attention was drawn to an article in the latest edition of the Norwich Evening News headlining that Norwich was the 14th most dangerous city in the UK for cyclists. It appears that this statistic had been taken from raw data of number of traffic collisions involving cyclists in Norwich, but did not take into account size of cities, the cycling infrastructure, the levels of cycling or the number of vehicles on the roads. Officers confirmed that they had contact from a journalist the previous day but had very little time to undertake any analysis of the data and were disappointed

that the newspaper ran the story without providing an opportunity to comment. However, a commitment to scrutinise the data and report a more accurate picture was undertaken.

5. Cycle and Pedestrian Crossing of Outer Ring Road (Mile Cross)

5.1 The Joint Committee received the report setting out proposals to improve crossing facilities on Boundary Road which benefit those walking and cycling locally and will also increase connectivity for those cycling between Hellesdon and the city centre using the proposed brown pedalway route.

5.2 The Transport for Norwich Manager introduced the report to the Joint Committee and advised:

- The committee had in July 2021 agreed to proceed to consultation with two options of upgrading the existing junction near B&Q to allow cycle use or add a new cycle crossing connecting Vera Road to Rye Avenue. Both options retained the existing pedestrian crossing on Boundary Road near Vera Rd.
- The public consultation results reflected a majority in favour of the principles of the scheme as well as preferring the B&Q crossing upgrade.
- The walking and cycling infrastructure on both sides of Boundary Road will also be enhanced.
- Waiting restrictions in the layby opposite Marshall Road will be altered to avoid vehicles from blocking the pedestrian and cycle route.
- Traffic assessments of the proposals showed negligible differences in traffic flow or queue lengths at junctions.
- Carriageway resurfacing works and planned signal upgrade works will be undertaken at the same time to minimise disruption.
- The scheme represents very high value for money based on the assessment criteria set by the government.

5.3 The following points were discussed and noted:

- It was acknowledged that there were pro and cons with both options but on balance the B&Q option was preferable.
- Good clear signage on both sides of the road would be installed to indicate to cyclists that the new facilities to cross the road were in place which will increase usage.
- Segregation between cyclists and pedestrians whilst being the default option was not possible on the scheme due to layout restrictions.
- During lockdown, testing was carried out on various crossings across Norwich to try and improve responsiveness to reduce waiting times for those crossing, once the crossing button had been pressed. Good results had been seen from the test period and these learnings would be taken forward to all schemes in the future, including the scheme at Boundary Road.

5.3 The Joint Committee considered the scheme and **RESOLVED** to agree to the proposals as follows:

1. To approve the preferred proposals for the improvement at the B&Q junction as shown in Appendix D for construction;
2. To commence the statutory procedures associated with the necessary legal Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and Noticing required to implement the scheme as shown in Appendix D.

6. Dereham Road Corridor

6.1. The Joint Committee received the report which aimed to deliver five individual schemes collectively for improvements to bus links, bus journey times and reliability. The scheme would also improve the environment for walking and cycling as well as providing two mobility hubs which will enable a range of onward travel options by sustainable means.

6.1.2 The Transport for Norwich Manager introduced the report to the Joint Committee:

- New bus lanes would be introduced where delays for buses are currently experienced.
- A reduction in speed limits would increase the safety of vulnerable road users.
- Bus journey times were predicted to reduce by 2 minutes per journey and become more reliable, whilst the impact on general traffic was expected to be minimal, more assessment is required as designs are worked up.
- Bus services along Dereham Rd are currently lower than pre pandemic levels. During the pandemic, to comply with the government funding support arrangements, which recognised the reduction in public transport use during lockdowns, bus journeys along the Dereham Road were reduced to 6 journeys per hour in each direction. As lockdown eased, First Buses were impacted by driver shortages which added to the need for further restrictions to 4 journeys per hour in each direction. These short term issues when resolved will see journey frequencies return to pre pandemic levels.
- First Buses have committed to increasing journey frequency to 10 buses an hour in each direction along Dereham Road if time savings for bus journeys can be delivered through the scheme.
- The scheme will return to the committee once the public consultation, if agreed, has been undertaken and responses considered.

6.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The issues at the junction with East Hills Road with buses manoeuvring in a tight space due to parked cars was known and a resolution was being sought.
- The majority of bus lanes introduced, particularly on the inbound carriageway would have little effect on general traffic as the lane was being created from re allocation of road space and not by reducing lanes for general traffic.
- It was though desirable to extend the 30mph limit zone along the whole strength of Dereham Road up to and including the Longwater Retail Park.
- A different scheme, funded by a local housing development nearby, will provide a crossing over the busy William Frost Way as well as providing cycling and walking improvements in the locality.
- Improvements to the Larkman Lane / Marlpit Lane congestion issues are limited due to the lack of road space in the area.
- Bus lanes generally finish 30m short of a junction to allow general traffic to use both lanes to reduce congestion over a junction.

6.3 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Approve the preliminary public consultation on the Dereham Road Corridor proposals as shown in Appendices A to E.

7.0 Thickthorn Park & Ride Expansion

7.1 The Joint Committee received the report which aimed to improve capacity at the site which in turn will help reduce congestion, improve air quality and encourage a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

7.2 The Transport for Norwich Manager introduced the report to the Joint Committee:

- The scheme sought to increase the capacity of the facility for a further 460 car

parking spaces and 8 new coach parking bays.

- 31 electric car charging ports will be provided initially but ducting will be installed to all new spaces to expand the charging capabilities in the future if required.
- The scheme was looking to proceed to a planning submission to South Norfolk District Council.

7.3 The following points were discussed and noted:

- All the necessary statutory environmental assessments and reports required for the planning application had been undertaken.
- Whilst patronage of the Park and Ride (P&R) service had reduced it was anticipated this would return to pre pandemic levels in the near future.
- UK Power Networks have confirmed that power supply to the site is not an issue and all car charging points for the expansion will be able to be supplied.
- Car users using P&R leave their vehicles parked for longer periods, so charging wattages and speed required are lower and slower to those for charging stations, such as the proposed facility at Postwick, which is aimed at catching more en route users.
- The committee thought the introduction of solar generated power for the expansion facilities would be a welcome addition to consider.
- The bus service improvement plan outlines an ambition to have 100 electric buses in operation by 2025. A business case for an initial 15 buses was currently being prepared. However, advancements in battery technology was likely to mean that buses could operate daily on an overnight charge only, rather than requiring top ups at regular intervals. This means the requirement for charging buses at P&R sites is unlikely.

7.4 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. To approve the submission of a planning application for the scheme to South Norfolk District Council.

8.0 Transport for Norwich Strategy

The Joint Committee received the report which brings the item back to the committee with the results of the public consultation which run from 26th August 2021 to 8th October 2021.

8.1 Principal Planner Richard Doleman introduced the report:

- The public consultation had shown wide support for the high level strategy produced.
- Broadland, Norwich City and Breckland Councils had also responded to the consultation.
- The key issues emerging from the public consultation were that the city serves a wider area which was mainly rural which requires joined up connectivity and ensuring that inequalities in transport choices were addressed.
- The next step actions for the high level policy was a theme throughout the feedback and plans were being drawn up in conjunction with officers from the other local authorities involved to outline the actions required.
- Traffic modelling work had already commenced to help inform and develop the next stages.
- The plans for the next stage of funding for the bus service improvements had already been submitted as public transport formed a large part of the strategy.
- The County Council was committed to working with partners to help identify and resolve key issues moving forward.
- A schedule of changes to the strategy had been proposed for adoption by Cabinet in December.

8.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- Although members suggested lists of potential requirements to be included in the strategy, officers advised that to date the document produced was very high level and that the opportunity to add detail would be included within the next stages and action plans currently being produced.
- The number of people aged 30 or under who responded to the consultation was extremely low and it was acknowledged that more work to engage younger people in the process was required.
- The local walking and cycling plans will sit inside the strategy to ensure there is no conflict in delivery.
- Some members expressed disappointment that the principle of not building any new roads wasn't included within the strategy. However, being too descriptive at this stage may close down opportunities that arise in the future and as new technologies come on stream.
- Environmental assessments will be carried out and will reflect amendments to the strategy

8.3 The Joint Committee noted the responses received to the consultation and the proposed changes as set out in Appendix 2.

The Meeting ended at 3:38pm

Next meeting: 13 January 2022

**Cllr Martin Wilby, Chair,
Joint Committee for Transport for Norwich**



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