

DRAFT CTC RESPONSE TO TRANSPORT FOR NORWICH STRATEGY CONSULTATION – SEPTEMBER 2021

General:

CTC Members appreciated that the consultation was of a high-level strategic document and therefore very aspirational, but expressed disappointment at the lack of detail as to how to implement the strategy.

While the strategy to discourage use of the motor car was laudable, there appeared to be a starting premise that, as public transport providers were private commercial businesses, subsidies to boost the number or frequency of bus services were not appropriate, and this basis has closed off opportunities to implement the strategy.

There appeared to be a large gap between the strategy's aspirations and what could be deliverable on a practical level, which meant that the only means of persuasion to alter public behaviour was via a rather negative route rather than positive encouragement.

It was noted that money to fund any initiatives could be available from the *Build Back Better* initiative and the *Transforming Cities Bid*.

Norwich and Norfolk

The Strategy presumes that a large part of the highways areas will be given over to “active” users in future ie pedestrians, cyclists etc.

A zero-carbon future

Improving Air Quality

Planning Authorities will have to incorporate more electric charging points in new developments and at buildings used by the public – eg supermarkets to allow a switch to electric vehicles as the coverage of charging points is currently sporadic,

Changing attitudes and behaviours

Cost plays a huge part in this. A “carrot and stick” approach of encouragement and draconian measures to penalise those who use the car may work, but it depends on improving bus services to the extent that they are the best option, certainly in the city and surrounding area.

Bus lanes and increases in bus services, which are essential to achieve this strategy, require the co-operation of the Bus operators and a strategic dialogue to persuade them to provide the necessary transport infrastructure.

This is likely to include subsidies to achieve the required frequency of services which will make passengers more willing to use them.

Regular timetabling is also likely to result in more people using the buses.

A flat rate fare charge could be introduced across the city – where this was trialled in Brighton, patronage of buses went up by 70%.

A Congestion Charge could be introduced for motorists, which could then subsidise public transport services

If pedestrians and cyclists are to increase across the city and travel out to the fringe parishes such as Costessey, they must feel safe when they use the roads and public transport.

This raises questions of easy accessibility to bus and cycle routes, accessibility onto buses, safety in bus / cycle lanes, simple fare structures, frequency and regularity of services (eg always 20 minutes past the hour), lighting, bus shelters, cleanliness, easy and safe crossing points, integrated planning of services and other infrastructure

Supporting growth areas

Development should take place where there is already transport infrastructure. eg Spooner Row has a railway station, but only a few trains per day. If land were found for car / cycle parking near the station this could become a travel hub into the city for commuters and shoppers.

Wyndham also has a car park for commuters near the station. This should be replicated elsewhere.

Where development is planned the infrastructure should be built first – including roads, schools, surgeries, broadband, and larger infrastructure projects serving a wide area such as concert halls etc

The design of new estates is important and should take into account housing density, sufficient parking, wider spine roads, possible shared surfaces, plus other infrastructure.

Double yellow lines should automatically be incorporated into new developments to keep vehicles clear of the spine routes and, once roads are adopted, they should be rigorously enforced. This means employing more Enforcement Officers to prevent inconsiderate parking, allowing buses to travel through estates without hindrance

Meeting local needs

Costessey:

With regard to Costessey in particular, Councillors wished to know how priorities were worked out between different users.

For example, a local petition amongst Costessey residents had sought to reduce the timings of the bus lane in Dereham Road to the peak hours only, to allow traffic to move

down Dereham Road more quickly so that there was less congestion and better air quality within Costessey.

In Costessey in particular, if more people travel by bike or on foot, there could be additional problems at traffic lights eg Longwater Lane Junction as this is already at capacity,

Also, the area around the northern “Mcdonalds” roundabout at the Longwater Interchange suffers from long queues in all directions at peak times, especially as there is only one route in and out of Queen’s Hills.

New Costessey in particular is a high density, highly populated area with bus routes to the city centre.

If pedestrians and cyclists are to increase across the city and travel out to the fringe parishes such as Costessey, they must feel safe when they use the roads and public transport.

Roads are built without adequate crossing points – William Frost Way is an example where a developer provided a sub-standard crossing, but it is extremely difficult to upgrade it because subsequent developers are unwilling to pay.

West End lost its buses years ago. The Queen’s Hills bus lane was intended to allow a bus service to be reintroduced along West End serving pockets of social housing where a reliable bus service is needed.

Queen’s Hills suffers from a relative lack of public transport / bus services and the opening of the bus lane has been delayed let alone finding a route for a second exit to ease congestion and promote higher air quality.

The bus lane along Dereham Road was supposed to give buses from the Costessey Park and Ride (P+R) a clear run down the Dereham Road to the city centre, but immediately after it was built the P+R buses were re-routed down to the University and the hospital, so the bus lane gets far fewer buses than originally intended.

Reducing the dominance of traffic

Some members believed that the P+R sites were too close to the city, because once a driver had driven to the edge of the city it was more convenient and cheaper to carry on into the city centre and park there. P+R sites would be better placed further out.

It was suggested that multi-use vehicles could have priority in bus lanes, to reduce the number of vehicles travelling to the city.

Low traffic area schemes could be piloted in residential areas such as Costessey, to fine vehicle owners who pass through the settlement.

Making the Transport system work as one

“Integrated travel” whereby the buses “meet” the trains, as happens on the continent, would also help connect places, as would a route across the city to the hospital from the

Taverham and Drayton areas, passing through Costessey on the way, or even a circular bus route.

Making it Happen

Bus lanes and increases in bus services, which are essential to achieve this strategy, require the co-operation of the Bus operators and a strategic dialogue to persuade them to provide the necessary transport infrastructure.

This is likely to include subsidies to achieve the required frequency of services which will make passengers more willing to use them, which the strategy appears to have discounted as a basic premise

Regular timetabling is also likely to result in more people using the buses.

Norfolk CC should perform an “origin and destination” survey of cars driving through Costessey to gather information as to why drivers cut through the settlement. It is only with detailed data that the strategy can be altered to suit the conditions prevailing on the roads, and solutions found to reduce car usage.