

Greater Norwich Development Partnership

Topic Paper: Transport

Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk
November 2009

Jobs, homes, prosperity for local people



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1. Summary

This topic paper is part of a series that explains how key aspects of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk have been developed. It draws together issues relating to transportation that have influenced the development of the Joint Core Strategy.

2. Purpose of this Topic Paper

This topic paper draws together issues relating to transportation that have influenced the development of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk.

3. National Guidance

National guidance relevant to transport considerations in development plans is to be found in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Notes or Planning Policy Statements (PPS). Much of the guidance is to ensure necessary development is as sustainable as possible and in this respect much emphasis is placed on minimising the need to travel, and trying to ensure that there are realistic alternatives to the car. Preparation of development plans is now the main mechanism by which major new development proposals can be assessed alongside the transport improvements needed to serve them, and by which transport proposals can be linked to the development opportunities they create.

3.1 PPG13: Transport

PPG13 provides advice as to how local authorities should integrate transport and land use planning, at a national, regional and local level to:

- Promote more sustainable transport choices for people
- Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling
- Reduce the need to travel, especially by car

3.2 PPS12: Development Plans

PPS12 gives Government policy and guidance on Local Development Frameworks (LDF). It affirms the importance of integrating spatial and transport planning, which means maintaining consistency between LDFs and Norfolk's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006/07-2010/11, which sets out the County Council's long term strategy for transport and transport proposals for the next five years.

PPS12 also highlights the role that Local Planning Authorities can play in improving accessibility, as the physical location of employment and services is as important to accessibility as transport provision.

3.3 PPS3: Housing

Policies on development of housing are set out in PPG3. Several implications for transport can be drawn out of this guidance. These include the need to promote more sustainable patterns of development, exploit and deliver accessibility by public transport to key services and seeking to reduce car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling. Furthermore, it underlines the need to examine critically the standards they apply to new development, particularly in regard to roads, layouts, car parking.

3.4 The Future of Transport White Paper

This sets out the Government's proposals for transport to 2030. The paper's key objective is balancing the need to travel with improving quality of life, based around three central themes:

- Sustained investment over the long term
- Improvements in transport management
- Planning ahead

3.5 Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS)

The report published in November 2008 sets out 5 goals.

- to **support** national **economic** competitiveness and **growth**, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks;
- to reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of **tackling climate change**;
- to **contribute to better safety, security and health** and longer life-expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health;
- to **promote** greater **equality of opportunity** for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society;
- to **improve quality of life** for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a **healthy natural environment**.

DaSTS will be a key document in shaping the County's transport policy including the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3). Work on LTP 3 has commenced and will be completed by March 2011

The 5 goals will be met through support of cross-cutting initiatives like those which encourage a modal shift to public transport, walking and cycling, making better use of the existing network and concentrating capacity growth on the lowest carbon emitting transport modes.

4. Regional Guidance

4.1 The East of England Plan

The East of England Plan (EEP) sets a regional context for growth over the next 20 years. It provides a framework for local authorities to produce development plans and sets out the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and policies relating to specific locations.

4.2 Regional Transport Strategy

The key principles of the RTS largely echo those of national guidance. Local development documents should seek to reduce the need to travel and encourage travel by means other than the private car. Furthermore, delivery of the sub-regional strategy requires local development documents to support better accessibility and transport infrastructure.

The objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy include;

- Improving opportunities for all to access jobs, services and leisure/tourist facilities
- Enable infrastructure programmes and transport service provision to support both existing development and that proposed in the spatial strategy
- Reduce the need to travel
- Reduce the transport intensity of economic activity, including freight
- Improve safety and security

Planning objectives in the EEP that also relate to transport are:

- Accommodate higher levels of growth in sustainable ways.
- Direct most strategically significant growth to the region's major urban areas where strategic networks connect and public transport is at its best.
- Direct development to where there is the greatest potential to build on existing concentrations of activities and physical and social infrastructure and to use growth as a means of extending and enhancing them efficiently.

4.3 Airport

The role of Norwich International Airport to meet more of the region's demand is recognised in the RTS. However, it does identify that access to Norwich Airport from the strategic road network needs to be addressed.

4.4 Strategic road and rail hierarchy

The RTS sets out the road and rail network which will act as strategic corridors for movements through the region and connecting the major economic generators within the region. Within Norfolk this includes the A47 and A11, the A12 corridor between Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft and the A17 between King's Lynn and Lincolnshire (shown on figure 4 the East of England Plan). Significantly, Policy T5 states that improvements to the public transport network are expected to focus on the strategic

network, on movement between Regional Interchange Centres (RICs) and on integration with the local bus network.

4.5 Regional Interchange Centres

The RTS identifies Regional Interchange Centres, of which Norwich and King's Lynn are recognised. The text supporting this states that the role of RICs as public transport interchanges will be strengthened by an assured role of other key centres and market towns, both in the provision of local services and as smaller transport hubs. But, it is identified that some areas are more accessible by public transport than others and that this should be taken into account locally when considering the location of facilities. The strategy also promotes the existence of strategic freight interchange where feasible. Presently, few specialist interchange facilities exist within the Eastern region and work will be undertaken to identify areas which need additional freight interchange capacity.

4.6 Norwich - Key Centre for Development and Change Policy NR 1

Norwich is identified as a Key Centre for Development and Change. Policy NOR1 recognises that the Norwich area should have a regional focus on housing; employment; retail; leisure; cultural and educational development with a particular aim to achieve a major shift in emphasis towards travel by public transport, walking and cycling.

The Regional Spatial Strategy identifies the strategic infrastructure to support the objectives of the Strategy. Improvements to transport infrastructure within Norfolk include:-

- Improvements to the A47 Blofield to North Burlingham. Since the RTS was drafted the scheme has been dropped as a regional priority and there will be no funding before 2014.
- Improvements to the A11 between the roundabout at the end of the Thetford Bypass immediately to the south west of Thetford and the Fiveways Roundabout at Barton Mills, near Mildenhall. This scheme is due to start in 2010 and be completed by 2013
- The Northern Distributor Road (NDR) connecting the A47 in the east to the A1067 Norwich to Fakenham Road to the north-west.

4.7 Local Transport Plan

Sets out the Local Highway Authority's vision, strategy and policies for transport and also describes the approach and measures that will be taken to implement these policies.

Key objectives in Norfolk include: -

- Improving strategic accessibility into Norfolk and also access to key services.
- Reducing the need to travel and improving journey reliability, especially or public transport.
- Reducing the number and severity of congestion incidents and road traffic collisions.

- Improving local air quality and minimising the adverse impacts of transport provision on the built environment.

Improvements to transport infrastructure within Norfolk include:-

- A140 Long Stratton Bypass; and
- The Northern Distributor Road (NDR)

The Local Transport Plan defines Sub Region and Area Transport Strategies that set the particular emphasis in those specific areas.

4.8 Norwich Sub Region Transport Strategy

In the Norwich Sub Region and more specifically the urban area of Norwich, there is a need to manage travel demand and promote sustainable travel.

Key objective is: -

“To provide the highest possible level of access to and within the strategy area to benefit peoples individual needs and enhance the economic health of the strategy area. To ensure that journeys minimise any adverse impact on people and the built and natural environment.”

4.9 Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS)

The NATS contains a more detailed analysis and promotes travel choice, recognising the need to maintain the economic health of the Norwich area and does not propose radical restrictions on vehicular access. The pedestrian area will be extended within the city centre.

Key objectives include: -

- Undertaking transport improvements that enhance and support the local economy together with building a Northern Distributor Road (NDR).
- Improving the pedestrian environment and also reduce the impact of traffic on residential streets.
- Implementing a programme of public transport improvements, including park and ride.
- Reducing the impact of poor air quality.
- Develop the Urban Traffic Control System to provide up-to-date real time information to assist congestion control.

The NDR is identified as a key element of NATS and its more specific objectives are to:

- Reduce congestion on strategic routes to the north of the city
- Reduce noise, air pollution and accidents for communities in the northern suburbs of Norwich and villages outside
- Enable removal of through traffic from the city centre and implementation of widespread pedestrian / bus priority measures.
- Provide direct access to growth locations, helping to deliver significant housing and employment growth

- Support the continued success of the Norwich economy.

An Implementation Plan for NATS is being prepared, which will outline transport proposals to deliver over the next 10-20 years.

4.9 Broads Area Transport Strategy

The Broads Area Transport Strategy recognises the special features of the Broads area. It aims to provide a safe, secure and accessible transport system that supports sustainable tourism and enhances the economic vitality and quality of the Broads area, while minimising the adverse impacts of transport and climate change on the Broads unique environment.

Key objectives include: -

- Improving sustainable transport options such as walking, cycling and public transport
- Improving sustainable transport interchange facilities
- Improving information and raising awareness about transport choices for tourists.

4.10 Rural Area Transport Strategy – Market Towns

The LTP recognises the role of market towns as service centres to their surrounding areas and promotes a system of hub and spoke connectivity. The predominant issues for transport in the rural area arise from the dispersed population and lack of widespread public transport and good quality roads. The private car will remain an important means of travel. Since the LTP was produced in 2006 the importance of some settlements not identified as Market Towns has been understood and Key Service Centres are now subject to the same policy consideration.

Key objectives for market towns and key service centres include: -

- Improving their role as interchange centres.
- Improving accessibility within the towns, particularly with regard to walking and cycling.
- Removing traffic from town centres where possible, to promote vibrant public spaces and thriving local economies that serve the rural hinterland.

Market towns and key service centres will remain a focus of rural activity and will be supported by public transport investment.

Market towns (as defined by the Local Transport Plan) within the area covered by the Joint Core Strategy are Wymondham, Aylsham, Diss, Loddon and Harleston. Key Service Centres as defined in the Joint Core strategy are Acle, Blofield, Brundall, Hethersett, Hingham, Loddon/Chedgrave, Long Stratton, Poringland/Framingham Earl, Reepham and Wroxham. Individual Market Town strategies have been completed for Diss, Aylsham and Wymondham.

4.11 Draft City Centre Spatial Strategy

A framework and programme for regeneration, management and maintenance of public space in the City Centre, taking account of all aspects of its form and use.

The purpose of the City Centre Spatial Strategy is to look at all aspects of the public domain rather than just allocating parts for pedestrians, parts for buses etc.

Key objectives include: -

- Ensuring the city thrives as a centre of exchange and employment
- Overcoming barriers to enterprise and stimulating regeneration
- Promoting integrated communities and overcoming obstacles to social inclusion

4.12 The Joint Core Strategy

The Joint Core Strategy(JCS) is a wide-ranging and diverse strategy covering a large and varying geographical area. This reflects in the many, complex and varied transportation issues. The content of the strategy has been shaped by the relevant transport policy. In turn, the outcome of the work on the joint core strategy will shape and inform plans for future transport implementation and investment through mainstream and growth point funding. These will continue to be developed and will be used to refresh the Joint Core Strategy Delivery Framework.

4.13 Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement hierarchy within the JCS has been informed by service availability with the objective of reducing the need to travel. The details of the approach are contained in a separate topic paper considering the settlement hierarchy. In rural areas the categorisation of key service centres and service villages has included an assessment of public transport availability. The approach in rural areas has reflected the reality of existing service patterns but sought to ensure that growth will contribute to the long term success and viability of local services.

Consistent with the LTP the four Main Towns are market towns. The next level down in the hierarchy, known as Key Service Centres, contains a mix of market towns and larger villages and all have a reasonable spread of local services and local employment opportunities. The lowest tier that proposes allocation is service villages. These locations have limited local services but an assessment based on existing public transport services shows that there is accessibility to main towns and major urban areas.

4.14 Major Growth Locations

The spatial distribution of the large scale growth in Norwich Policy Area (NPA) has been informed by;

- Proximity to strategic employment sites
- Accessibility to local services.
- Availability of, or opportunity to deliver, high quality public transport access to the centre of Norwich
- Implementation through NATS

Old Catton, Rackheath, Sprowston, Thorpe St Andrew Growth Triangle

Situated on the north and north eastern urban edges of Norwich, the growth triangle is the largest growth location, well located to strategic employment opportunities at Broadland Business Park and the airport. As an urban extension local services and

employment opportunities exist. A choice of transport links to city centre across all modes already exist ensuring that a range of options for meeting travel demand are available giving greater certainty of delivery. Work to date has indicated that to achieve the public transport infrastructure, which may remove car capacity from the city, the NDR is required to take out through trips from the city. (NATS Plus Implementation Plan – Strategic Modelling of Joint Core Strategy, 2009). Large scale growth maximises city wide opportunities presented by the NDR to implement bus and cycle priority in the north and east to lock in benefits of through traffic removal.

The potential to deliver high quality public transport has been assessed through a series of reports commissioned to assist in developing the growth strategy. The reports identify the opportunities and constraints to enhancing the bus network and an assessment of the quality of service that can be sustained. The public transport assessment of the favoured option shows that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) could be supported by the scale of growth proposed in the growth triangle.

The area is served by the Bittern Line run as a Community Rail Partnership supported by the County Council. There is a station at Salhouse, which is close to the growth triangle but not well located to provide the central public transport service. Currently an hourly service runs to a very tight timetable. Consequently there is no opportunity to introduce extra stops. Putting in a new station better located for the growth area will require removal of a stop at an existing station to keep to the current frequency. Rail could be effective in helping deliver the public transport capacity for the North East but needs to have increases in frequency and capacity. Removal of existing level crossings in the vicinity of Salhouse Station will help line speed and is essential but still needs to be supported by investment in infrastructure to achieve ½ hourly frequencies to North Walsham. Early discussions have been held with Network Rail to investigate that potential for additional tram-style trains to run between existing heavy rail services. Tram trains are subject to a national trial in Yorkshire, but Network Rail indicated that the Bittern line would be a good application if the trial is successful. Successful implementation of tram train services would open up the possibility for more stops between Salhouse including Broadland Business Park and the Deal Ground and Utilities sites.

South West of Norwich.

There are 3 growth locations on the A11 corridor at Wymondham, Hethersett and Cringleford. The A11 Newmarket Road into city already has significant inbound and some out bound bus priority to the inner ring road and is one of the best performing public transport corridors in terms of journey time (based on current Park and Ride journey times). There are strategic employment areas at Wymondham (Gateway11) and at the Norwich Research Park/University of East Anglia both of which are easily accessible for the A11 corridor. Reports assessing the public transport impacts of growth commissioned to assist with preparation of the Joint Core Strategy have concluded that combining the existing settlements and planned housing and jobs growth on the B1172/A11 corridor provides a market with potential to support BRT. Wymondham has the opportunity to link in to existing heavy rail services.

One of the current limiting factors is the current layout of the existing A11/A47 Thickthorn interchange, currently a signalised grade separated junction. Work has been commissioned to look at impacts on trunk road junctions. A first phase has been completed and more detailed work is being carried out as part of development of the NATS Implementation Plan. It is clear that the current layout is not capable of catering for the additional travel demand predicted to arise from growth on the A11 corridor. A potential scheme has been devised and this will be refined through further technical assessments in conjunction with the Highways Agency.

West

Growth in the west, predominantly centred on Easton will be contingent on improvements to junctions with the A47. Work already carried out by the county council has shown that significant improvement (approx £15m) to the Longwater interchange is required to accommodate committed housing growth and unlock constraints to fully developing the Longwater strategic employment site. There is some developer funding secured through S106 agreements, however there is a funding gap of about £12m with no committed source of funding. The GNDP are seeking opportunities to secure gap funding. It is not clear whether this improvement will unlock road capacity to enable growth.

As a contingency there is another junction to the west of Easton at the end of the Norwich southern bypass that could be improved to provide access. There has been no detailed assessment made, but discussions with the Highways Agency have not identified any in principle problems with doing this.

Growth in the west although likely to be centred on Easton will inevitably look towards the retail offer at Longwater. The A47 is a barrier to pedestrian and cycling access. A proposal to provide a foot/cycle bridge over is in the Integrated Delivery Programme and has been costed at about £1.5m. The bridge will need to be provided a part of the supporting transportation infrastructure.

The A1074 Dereham Road is emerging as a BRT corridor in NATS and growth in Easton is well placed (together with existing development commitments) to provide a critical mass to support high quality public transport on the corridor. There is already significant bus priority on the A1074 with further growth point funded proposals to do more and improve bus service information along this corridor.

Long Stratton

Long Stratton is a standalone village about 11 miles to the south of Norwich on the A140, a former trunk road. The A140 is a vital link from the county south to London, Felixstowe and the A14. The A140 passes through the centre of the village, causing severance and damaging the local environment. Within the settlement there is a signal controlled junction and a pedestrian crossing, which help the settlement overcome severance created by the road, but add delay to through traffic.

The Local Transport Plan promotes a bypass for Long Stratton as a major scheme and there is extant planning consent for a dual carriageway scheme that expires in July 2010. The scheme has not secured any Regional Funding Allocation pre 2014.

Growth in Long Stratton will be predicated on the delivery of a bypass as the local road network is inadequate to cater for the proposed scale without such an improvement. The bypass works will need to be backed up with village centre enhancements to adapt the former through route to its new local function.

Although a distance from Norwich there is a relatively successful ½ hourly bus service. To enhance patronage and improve the service, bus priority measures are proposed on the approach to the A140/A47 junction. Initial work has shown there is scope for the priority and capacity improvements within the existing layout. Details will need to be worked through with the Highways Agency as part of the ongoing work to develop the NATS Implementation Plan.

Rural Areas

In the rural areas of the plan there is a need to balance policy objectives to reduce reliance on the private car and achieve accessibility to key services and employment with the desire to meet local housing need. The LTP promotes a system of hub and spoke connectivity to Market towns, but it is difficult to provide a high level of bus service to all villages. Smaller settlements for small scale growth (key service centres and below) should have a range of local services and at the very minimum provide a journey to work service to link to a market town or Norwich. Ideally some daytime service is needed to provide access to healthcare and other non work destinations.

A longer term aspiration of the Local Transport Authority is to move towards demand responsive transport (DRT) to improve overall rural accessibility. A move towards DRT will provide better rural PT coverage but the removal of a formal timetable adds variability to journey times and has the potential to harm the use for journey to work trips.

5. NATS Implementation Plan

An Implementation Plan for NATS is in the process of being developed which will inform the Delivery Framework for the Joint Core Strategy. It not only picks up the NATS strategy and the favoured option for growth but has regard to the RSS and work done to develop a city centre spatial strategy. Although the work is not yet finalised there are a number of strategic elements that have begun to emerge as key dependencies of large scale growth.

- Implementation of 6 BRT corridors linking major growth locations and strategic employment areas to the city centre.
- The NDR
- Enhanced core bus routes
- City centre realm enhancements to improve walking and cycling
- Improvements to southern bypass junctions with A140, A11 B1108 and A1074

Strategic transport modelling has been commissioned to test the effectiveness for the proposals. Initial runs and analysis support the package of transport interventions proposed in both the NATS Implementation Plan and the Joint Core Strategy. More detail of modelling can be found in the full report. That is available a part of the evidence base.

5.1 The NDR

A key component of the NATS package is the Northern Distributor Road (NDR). The modelling to date shows that the scheme will relieve congestion, reduce 'rat running' and free up capacity within the city centre and on other key routes to enable the provision of improved facilities across transport modes such as improved bus priority, cycling and pedestrian facilities. We are approaching the point where there is little scope for further bus, cycle or walking prioritisation within Norwich without the 'elbow room' created by the NDR in removing extraneous traffic from the City. It is also necessary to accommodate the level of growth proposed in the East of England Plan and this Joint Core Strategy.

The current work to develop the NATS Implementation Plan will develop a range of transport interventions alongside the NDR. BRT along the main radial routes into Norwich is likely to be a key element of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and will also firm up complementary measures for the NDR planning process.

5.2 Funding

The NDR scheme is estimated to cost £127.2m at outturn. The Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) is £79.7m between 2012 and 2016. A Major Scheme Business Case for the NDR is currently being assessed by DfT and a decision on this bid for funding is expected in December 2009. A bid for £19m. from the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) for the Postwick Hub element of the scheme is currently being considered and a decision on the outcome is also expected in December 2009. The remainder of the funding is expected to be made up from County Council and developer funded contributions.

5.3 Timescale

Work is expected to start on the NDR in late 2012 with completion in early 2015, subject to the satisfactory completion of the Statutory Procedures and the availability of funds.

5.4 Postwick Hub/Broadland Gate

The Postwick Hub part of the scheme forms a new junction between the A47 Trunk Road and the NNDR but can also serve as a stand alone scheme to enable, when constructed, further development of much needed employment growth and housing in the Broadland Business Park. A joint planning application for the Postwick Hub/Broadland Gate development has been submitted by the County Council and Ifield Estates.

If the bid from the CIF fund is successful, it is hoped that construction of the Postwick Hub can start early in 2010 with completion in September 2011.

5.5 Development of the Implementation Plan

As detail of the NATS Implementation Plan continues to emerge the required interventions to underpin sustainable growth will be taken forward into the Joint Core Strategy implementation framework. Consultation on the NATS Implementation Plan takes place in October and November 2009 and has the aim of raising awareness of the key issues being addressed by NATS and seeks to obtain feedback from businesses, stakeholders and the general public on the proposals. The level of support for the package of measures is sought and feedback will be used to shape the Implementation Plan presented to Members for sign-off in spring 2010.

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