

Transport for Norwich — Strategy —

Reducing the Dominance of Traffic



Chapter Eleven - Reducing the Dominance of Traffic

Highlights of this Chapter

This section sets out what the main difference the policies set out in this chapter will make, and some of the key commitments and interventions that the strategy will bring about:

- Enhancing the public realm through improvements to the transport system
- The major implications of this policy are likely to be that new schemes, or changes to the network, will need to take full account of the place. This could mean the design of schemes is different, or of a different standard, in certain locations. A higher cost might be involved
- It also sets out a policy around neighbourhoods. Here, the significant difference will be that traffic impacts on residential neighbourhoods will be reduced
- This will be achieved through a series of interventions including 20mph speed limits, low traffic neighbourhoods (ie, stopping through traffic using routes through residential estates; they will be restricted to main roads).



Context

- 11.1 Norwich is a city of considerable historic importance and any infrastructure intervention must be sympathetic to its surroundings and the public realm or must provide sufficient mitigation measures. Over 90% of cars entering Norwich in the morning rush hour have single occupancy. Consequently, the road network in Norwich is dominated by car traffic, causing congestion, delays, and air and noise pollution all of which detract from the city's cultural heritage and can deter people from active travel. Road space in Norwich is finite and the space cars are currently taking up is not being used efficiently. Despite the provision of Park and Ride, local bus services and cycle routes, the car remains the preference with affordable parking within the city centre and, for some, free parking at their place of employment, adding to the convenience of cars over active travel and public transport options. The TfN Strategy strives to overcome this and reduce the dominance of traffic on Norwich's network.
- 11.2 The Covid-19 lockdowns did reduce the amount of traffic around the city. However, traffic levels are largely back to where they were pre-Covid-19. The benefits observed during the period of low traffic movements, such as improved air quality and reduced noise pollution, show what difference reduced traffic dominance can make.
- 11.3 The pandemic also altered the form of traffic in the city due to changed behaviours such as shopping, with more people shopping online during the national lockdown than ever before. When the first lockdown began in the UK, internet sales spiked from 19% of total retail sales to 32%, and levels remain higher than pre-Covid-19 over a year later. This results in increased delivery and light goods vehicles, adding to the dominance of traffic and making the streetscape less attractive for walking and



cycling. Whilst some delivery companies now use electric vans which lessen their contribution to air pollution, their presence on the network still exists and is something the transport network needs to adapt to as internet shopping and deliveries are projected to continue growing.

- 11.4 However, the pandemic did lead to the introduction of measures on some streets to help people keep their social distance, and to support local businesses when reopening, allowing restaurants and cafes to utilise the street space to seat customers. St Benedict's Street and Exchange Street were both closed to through traffic for these reasons. These interventions showed what could be done to support local businesses but also revealed learning points especially around the importance of delivery and customer collection for some retail outlets.
- 11.5 A Department for Transport public opinion survey on traffic road use, carried out in September 2020, found that three quarters of respondents supported the reduction of road traffic in towns and cities in England and their local area, and two thirds of respondents were supportive of reallocating road space to walking and cycling across towns and cities in England and their local area.
- 11.6 There are several policies that support the need for reduced traffic dominance. Government's Gear Change Vision (2020) looks to increase walking and cycling by segregating pedestrians and cyclists from volume traffic and implementing measures such as closing side roads to through traffic and creating school streets in order to create lower traffic neighbourhoods. This will contribute towards the creation of safe and peaceful environments to walk and cycle in. The Healthy Streets Approach also looks to create places where traffic is less dominant and where people feel safe and comfortable to walk and cycle and use public transport, as well as being sympathetic to the public realm.



Strategy and Policy

Places

11.7 The Norwich area has some highly valued historic and natural landscapes, streets and buildings. It is important that this is considered when transport interventions are being developed. The current Transforming Cities programme and the Cycle City Ambition Grant programme have both implemented schemes in sensitive historic areas of the city centre. The design of these interventions has been shaped by their environment to create public realm improvements and to be sympathetic to their surroundings.

Statement of Policy

PLACES

Changes to the transport network will seek to enhance the character and quality of places with historic, architectural or natural landscape character and ecological value.

Key Actions

11.8 Transport schemes developed in places of historical, landscape or architectural importance, including conservation areas, will be designed to ensure that they maintain or enhance the area and improve public realm.



Supporting Actions

11.9 We will also:

- Align our work in engaging with the planning system with the TfN Strategy eg ensure site allocations, masterplans, design codes and guidance deliver development in the right locations of the right quality
- Ensure that Conservation Areas will be respected or enhanced through the TfN strategy
- Ensure good quality materials and planting is sustained in maintenance activities.

Freight and deliveries

11.10 Freight and deliveries are essential for the functioning the city's economy. Attempts have been made to put in place freight consolidation schemes to minimise the impact of freight and delivery in the city. However, this has had limited success and take up. With the increase in online shopping and the impact of Covid-19 the pattern of freight and deliveries is changing and many localised deliveries to individual properties are being made this presents a challenge managing these movements on the local network. Some changes are starting to be made with the introduction of electric delivery vehicles by some online shopping companies. Norwich has also been trialling an e-bike cargo delivery service.



Statement of Policy

FREIGHT AND DELIVERIES

We will develop a coordinated approach for managing freight and deliveries to support clean modes of deliveries and minimise the impact of the movement of freight within the urban area with regard to emissions and traffic intrusion.

Key Actions

11.11 We will review how deliveries within the city centre are managed in the short term and in the long-term review how deliveries within the entire urban area are managed.

Supporting Actions

11.12 We will also investigate:

- Whether a Clean Air Zone could facilitate the shift to transhipment to a freight consolidation centre
- Provision of EV charge points for delivery vehicles
- Provision of e-cargo delivery services within the city centre



Neighbourhoods

11.13 Traffic and transport requirements have a very real impact on neighbourhoods within the Norwich area. We want to ensure that the strategy not only delivers on area wide objectives but also meets the needs of local communities. There has been a programme to introduce 20 mph zones across parts of the city and this strategy needs to take this forward to support low traffic neighbourhoods and active travel within these areas.

Statement of Policy

NEIGHBOURHOODS

We will work with local communities, elected members and stakeholders to reduce the impact of unnecessary traffic in neighbourhoods and provide connections that meet local needs and support active travel.

Key Action

11.14 We will undertake a strategic appraisal of traffic and transport issues experienced by local neighbourhoods to prioritise our work.

Supporting Actions

11.15 We will also investigate:

- Lower speed limits
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (reduce through traffic, point closures, bus gates)
- School streets (traffic reduction with part time road closures)
- Traffic management measures.





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