

**Thetford Network Improvement Strategy**

*Hannah Grimes, Transport Planner, Norfolk County Council*

<b>Summary</b>	
<p>Norfolk County Council is carrying out a series of market town studies – termed Network Improvement Strategies – to identify the most effective transport improvements to support future planned growth, help address transport issues such as congestion, enhancements to safety and access to public transport, and support the local economy.</p> <p>A presentation was given to the Board in February outlining the work. Following the Board an external workshop was held with stakeholders to ask what they feel are the current transport issues in Thetford and indicate what they felt were priorities. The key issues were identified, and Norfolk County Council’s consultants were commissioned. The reports are still being finalised but will then be used to feed into the Strategy.</p>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	
(i) The Board is asked to note progress.	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
	<p>Many of Norfolk’s market towns and larger villages have a considerable amount of planned housing and employment growth identified through the relevant Local Plans. Addressing the transport pressures this growth will bring is vital to facilitate the economic prosperity of these towns and villages and as such planning this ahead of growth allows the county council to respond accordingly.</p> <p>The suite of market town transport studies will identify the most effective transport improvements to support future planned growth and help address transport issues such as congestion, enhancements to safety and access to public transport. It is intended that the studies will support the economy of the area by helping to prioritise proposed schemes, assist with growth assumptions and influence potential funding opportunities in the future and ultimately facilitate planned housing and employment growth in these towns and villages</p> <p>Norfolk County Council’s Environment, Development and Transport committee (EDT) in September 2017 agreed that Thetford would be one of the first towns to be studied.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Work programme</b>
	<p>Work on the studies started with an assimilation of evidence about the known, existing problems and issues, followed by an external workshop to discuss stakeholders’ concerns and priorities, and what existing work is already being undertaken.</p> <p>The areas identified from the evidence-gathering and stakeholder engagement included congestion, connectivity to the main urban extensions in the north of the town, cycling, and a number of detailed traffic issues. The further technical</p>

	<p>work has looked at congestion and connectivity to the 5,000 new dwellings planned for Thetford, cycling and walking and traffic issues in the south of the town including Nuns' Bridges Road; a narrow route used by a number of large vehicles which sometimes get stuck causing congestion.</p> <p>The Walking and Cycling report looked at the routes below and suggested some improvements with some high-level route costs along the three routes below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route A: London Road, from commercial area at the west of the town to the town centre</li> <li>• Route B: Croxton Road, connecting the Thetford Urban Extension (west), existing residential areas, the Thetford Academy and town centre</li> <li>• Route C: Kilverstone, connecting the Thetford Urban Extension (east), Kilverstone, other residential areas and the town centre.</li> </ul> <p>The technical work on congestion and connectivity has found that several junctions are currently at, or close to, capacity, or will be in the future given the growth in and around the town. These include A134 Brandon Road / London Road / A134 Bury Road (currently operating over capacity) and A1075 / Norwich Road / A1066 Mundford Road / A1066 Hurth Way Junction (overcapacity in peak period in 2036, but phase 1 of the Thetford housing is expected to deliver improvements).</p> <p>The study also considered issues raised about traffic on Nuns' Bridges Road and found that future traffic growth is likely to cause lengthy queues and delays on this route. The study noted that there is a key desire line for traffic from the north of the town, essentially between the A1088 and A134. Further work is being put underway to consider the study findings and potential mitigation measures.</p> <p>An update went to Norfolk County Council's EDT committee on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March.</p> <p>A draft of the Strategy will be circulated to stakeholders and the Greater Thetford Partnership Board before the study is finalised and reported back to Cabinet for adoption. For Thetford, this is anticipated to be spring 2019.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Contribution to Board Objectives</b>
	The activity will contribute to Objective 1 to improve infrastructure and Objective 6 to encourage economic vitality.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	(i) The Board is asked to note progress.

### Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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### Appendices

## **Background Documents**

Report to Norfolk County Council Environment Development and Transport Committee 17 March 2017

Report to Norfolk County Council Environment Development and Transport Committee 15 September 2017

Report to Norfolk County Council Environment Development and Transport Committee 8 March 2019