

SUSTAINABLE URBAN TRANSPORT FOR NORWICH – REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION REPRESENTATION

The draft Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) currently undergoing consultation will guide growth planning (land allocation, detailed site briefing and infrastructure prioritisation as well as the channelling of government growth related funding) over the period 2018-2038.

As such the plan is subject to the government requirement for sustainable development set out in the NPPF, which should guide all decision making in this area. **We contend that the present movement infrastructure proposition underlying the GNLP falls short of planning for sustainable movement, and consequently fails to maximise a sustainable land use pattern to underpin growth over the period 2018-2038 without an orbital transport proposal.**

The coming years represent a critical moment for us to take responsibility for sustainability and to plan future growth to ensure that the urban footprint and infrastructure decisions we make now maximises 'good growth' for future generations.

We anticipate that, as measures to mitigate climate change are re-prioritised following the many incidents of extreme weather that have been experienced on a global basis over recent years, the drive towards more sustainable development patterns will intensify. The ambition for **environmental net gain** is embedded in the ambition of the present Environment and Agriculture Bills, and we anticipate that it may also become an embedded requirement of the government's anticipated Planning Bill and we would therefore suggest that in order to robustly plan forward 20 years, that the infrastructure planning is fundamentally important.

We make the following background points in support of this position:

We observe that movement technology and consumer habits with regard to lifestyle choice are rapidly changing. Increasing concern at the effects of pollution on human health is bringing cleaner movement technology. The advent of electric vehicles makes cars more acceptable within urban environments, sets up a requirement for charging facilities, however retains the need to plan for movements of volumes of private vehicles throughout the road network. Fractional ownership is on the rise via car clubs (a pioneer in this industry is based in Norwich), and, together with lift share technology revolutionises the need to own a private car. Automation *may* deliver self driving cars on public highways, however will *certainly* improve the viability of self-driving public transport systems. Materials technology is becoming lighter which will also assist reducing the cost in use of light public transport systems. All of the advances set out need to be considered and provided for in planning for movement, infrastructure and transport decision-making. **We contend that the GNLP, as currently conceived, does not sufficiently consider presently available innovative movement technology in its planning for movement, nor does it provide a sufficiently robust movement proposition such that technological advances can be grasped for the benefit of the greater Norwich area over the coming 20 year period.**

At the same time, the general public is increasingly adopting a more responsible attitude to the impact of excessive car use. Many individuals, both for reasons of principle and economy, are choosing not to own their own car. The advent of micro electric vehicles is opening up new opportunities for 'last mile' – or even 'last 3 miles' movement. **Within the property context, this is being reflected in many cities by an increasing drive to produce mixed use neighbourhoods which provide for daily needs within walkable public transport accessible neighbourhoods.** The delivery of mixed use, public transport-accessible neighbourhoods *should be* a key underpinning building block of the GNLP to be more sustainable, support health and well-being and lifestyle choice, and to deliver sustainable new

growth. Equally, an optimal public transport proposition needs to be planned in, together with the density and disposition of supporting land uses, such that there is a sufficient density of population within a walkable distance of public transport stops, and trip generating uses in their vicinity so as to make new, additional public transport provision viable both on a capital and revenue basis.

Localised trip reduction achievable through moving towards a more mixed use urban footprint, and modal shift towards public transport and other sustainable modes would have the consequence of **freeing up capacity on the existing road networks, and enable a more optimal distribution of existing road capacity**. A fundamental ambition of the GNLP should be to deliver choice and the ability for households to 'live locally', supported by public transport access to employment areas and more strategic facilities such as the city centre, UEA, Airport, Norwich Railway Station and Norwich & Norfolk Hospital.

For the reasons set out above Create, Smart Growth and Others to consider how a more sustainable urban transport proposition for the greater Norwich area could be conceived to support a more sustainable movement and growth plan. We submit the attached drawings based on our knowledge and analysis of the Norwich area, coupled with our collective professional experience.

These describe the potential of planning for additional public transport within the Greater Norwich area to support circular movement on sustainable basis connecting the Broadland Business Park in the east (with its planned stop on the Bittern Mainline), with the Airport Business Park, Norwich Airport to the North. We believe that the route might be extended onward through established suburbs in North Norwich to connect onward to the University of East Anglia, Norwich Research Park and Norwich & Norfolk Hospital, and then onward to a new station on the Norwich to Cambridge line in vicinity of Thickthorn a short distance from the park and ride.

A second route would intersect with the orbital movement route set out, which would envisage the delivery of a new light rail service connecting Norwich City Centre along the Marriott's Way at least as far as Thorpe Marriott. This would be designed to operate in complement to much-valued bike and walking routes along the Wensum Valley. Both routes would connect existing centres of population with key centres of economic and public activity within the Greater Norwich area enabling modal shift and more sustainable access. This would underpin additional connection by public transport between Norwich city centre and the UEA/NRP/NUH campus, delivering a viable green transport plan for the burgeoning number of student residence driving development in Norwich City Centre.

Further light rail could be proposed using the existing rail lines of the last section into Norwich of the Bittern Line and Gt Yarmouth line, providing a fast/efficient service for commuters from the North East Growth Triangle and from villages to the east of Norwich. This would involve the construction of a new multi-modal interchange at the NDR junction of Plumstead Road, providing a high quality regular rail service from the City Centre to the Broadland Business Park and the growing residential community.

A new Norwich Orbital Service would link the main employment areas of the east, the north, with a link across to the NRP/UEA/Norwich University Hospital cluster. This new orbital service could either initially be an autonomous electric bus based route, or could be developed into either light rail or a tram system.

It is intended that this new strategic multi-modal transport strategy would be managed and controlled as part of a new SMART transport strategy for Norwich. This would manage and coordinate traffic flows in the City Centre, especially around the inner ring road, with detailed travel advice being provided live to end users, enabling people to choose the most efficient and sustainable route and

mode of travel into the Historic City centre. Hopefully ensuring that access is maintained to the city enabling it to retain its role as the main economic centre of the region whilst protecting its historic core.

Finally, the proposition would also underpin a sustainable leisure and recreational proposition for the growth areas connecting the established and new urban populations via sustainable movement modes to:

- The potential of linked green infrastructure across the NE Growth Sector including Redmayne, Belmore Park and White House Farm and woods.
- Access to the woodlands in vicinity of Horsford and Drayton Drewery
- The Walsingham Way historic pilgrimage route along the Wensum Valley
- Sports facilities at UEA campus

This would be intensified if provision were available to transport bicycles to the edge of the city safely and easily; and for transport interchanges at key points along the route to also offer bike and e bike hire, and parking.

We further understand that, due to increasingly efficient emerging technology, the viability case for local and light rail is becoming easier to demonstrate. Local rail connections to unlock sustainable local movement and productivity are increasingly of interest to the Department of Transport and BEIS, and Norwich should consider the implications of this in its future planning.

We therefore recommend that the GNLP includes the potential for building significant new public transport infrastructure on the basis of the routes identified into the GNLP so as to secure a strategy that delivers on sustainability, enabling a shift towards a more sustainable movement provision, and enabled by footprinting existing and new settlement to be more walkable and public transport accessible, which could include land use on a mixed use basis in the vicinity of public transport stops.