

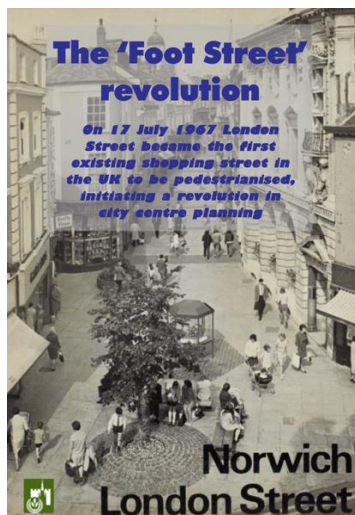
LPT4 Comparator Case Study – Norwich (DRAFT)

1. Context

Background

Norwich is the county town, and by far the largest urban area in Norfolk. It sometimes styles itself as “the capital of East Anglia”. It lies about 118 miles north of London, and 78 miles east of Peterborough.

Norwich shares much in common with York in terms of its history, economic development and physical geography. It is a cathedral city, and probably the most extensive Medieval urban environment in the UK. It has an extensive pedestrianised core, a major campus university and hospital. There is a further university in the central area, and a major FE College.



Norwich has always had a tightly-drawn boundary, which is fully developed and has a population of around 120,000. However, the built-up area of the city extends outside this area and contains about double that population. Where Norwich does differ from York is in having a very sizeable catchment area – almost 400,000 people. This has meant that the retail and service function of the city is better developed than one might expect.

The plans for Norwich forecast an increase of some 30,000 homes over the next decade. There are 13 sites allocated to house significant numbers of dwellings. The largest site (3,500 dwellings) is at North Sprowston/Old Catton. A new eco-town was planned for the Rackheath area to the NE of the city. Over the last two decades the population of central Norwich – largely within the walls) has risen by over 59%

Governance

Until 1974 Norwich was a unitary authority, responsible for its own planning and highways matters. It developed a reputation for innovation, for example, appointing the first separate planning officer, developing a ‘loop and cell’ approach to traffic management and introducing the first pedestrianised street in the Country. After 1974 it became a district of Norfolk County Council, with very limited planning and transport powers. This could be a salutary model for York if the proposed reorganisation of local government goes the wrong way!

For strategic planning and policy on transport the lead authority is now Norfolk County Council. It works in the context of the approved Norfolk Structure Plan (1999)

Norwich City Council plays no real role in strategic transport policy-making, except perhaps as a consultee. It does have limited powers in local highways and transport management, and on enforcement (under the Traffic Management Act).

The New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, covering Norfolk and Suffolk, is based in Norwich <https://newanglia.co.uk>. This sets out the economic and industrial strategy. It identifies Norwich and "Greater Norwich" as a 'priority place' – having significant opportunities for future growth.

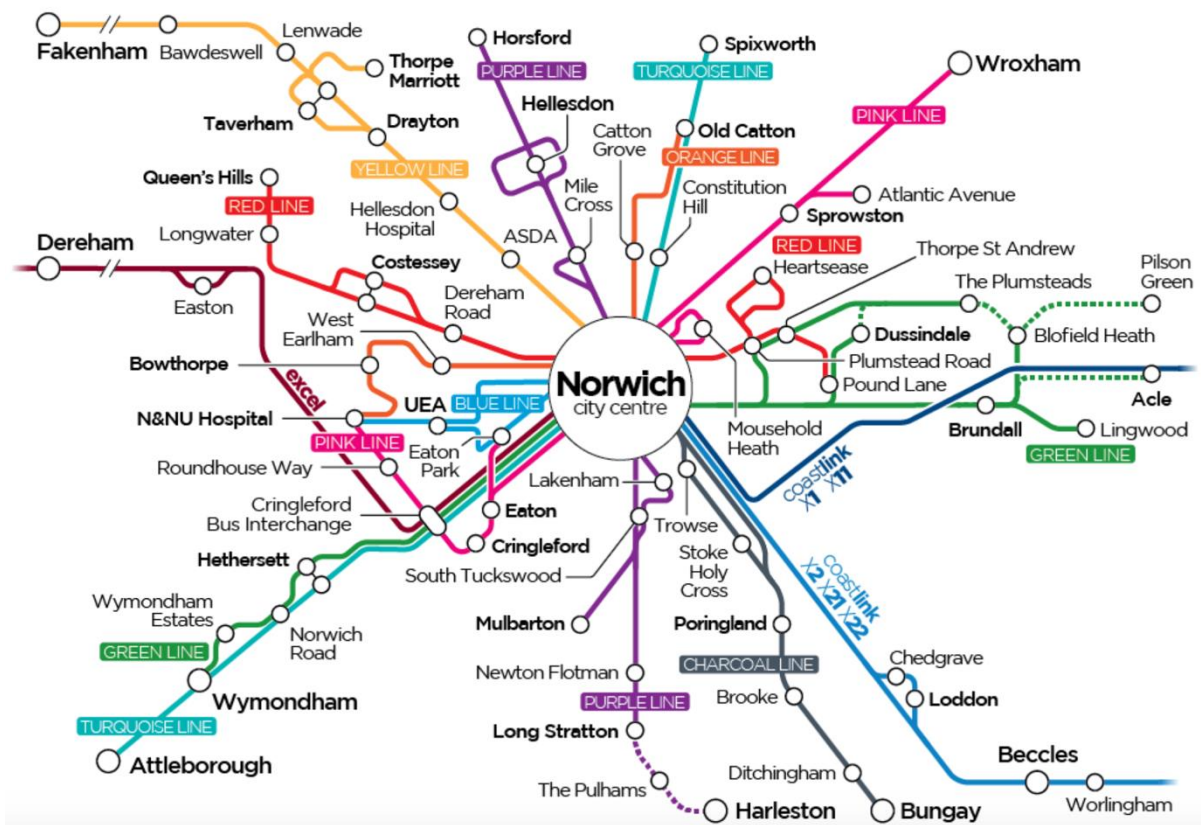
Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Councils have formed the Greater Norwich Growth Board <https://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/delivery/greater-norwich-infrastructure-plan/> to oversee the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan.

Thumbnail of current transport provision

Rail services are provided by Greater Anglia, and NCC has been a stakeholder in the provision of updated rolling stock. Major lines link Norwich to London, Cambridge/Stansted and Peterborough.

Norwich has a well-developed P&R system. There are 6 sites, with 2 more under consideration. Also 6 Bus Rapid Transit routes linking major employment zones. Arguably, York's P&R is better quality, but there are some lessons to learn, e.g. extended hours access.

The commercial bus network is complex but most commercial services within the city are run by FirstBus (Network Norwich).



There is a Quality Bus Partnership. NATS includes a plan to achieve a major shift towards public transport use, through more priority measures, improve operating frequencies and develop orbital travel opportunities. Access to bus services should be available to all within 400 metres (5 minute walk).

Smart electronic ticketing has been introduced. There is also a strong community transport network.

2. Transport planning

A Local Transport Plan was agreed for the whole county, covering the period 2011-2026. This LTP3 - called *Connecting Norfolk* - has been regularly monitored, and there are six reports. The latest, dated January 2020, focuses on the Strategic Environmental Assessment of LTP3, this being a legal requirement at the time.

A parallel document, the Implementation Plan, has been produced for the 4 years 2011-2015, then rolled forward in a second document covering 2015-2021. These documents describe how the *Connecting Norfolk* strategy will be implemented, including financing.

The existing Local Transport Plan can be found on these links:

[Norfolk Local Transport Plan 2011-2026](#)

[Norfolk Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 SEA Monitoring Report 2020](#)

[Connecting Norfolk Implementation Plan](#)

A new Local Transport Plan, covering the period 2021-2036 is at an advanced stage of preparation. It is publicly available in draft form, and was due for adoption in April 2021. A consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment) has recently been completed. We should check whether this is a requirement for York's LTP4.

The Local Transport Plan (LTP4), covering the period 2020-2036, is available here (77 pages):

[Local Transport Plan 4 Draft Strategy](#)

Priority objectives of the Plan

Key priorities for LTP4 are addressing air quality and carbon reduction (target net zero by 2030). Also "tackling the infrastructure deficit" – promoting quick and reliable train, bus and road journeys.

Responding to changes in behaviour resulting from the introduction of new technologies and new ways of working.

New development in areas well suited to active travel. Tackling accessibility problems for communities most in need. Improving the quality of place.

Arguably, while LTP4 says all the right things, there are few specifics about how the objectives can be achieved and the tough choices that will have to be made.

Strategic approach

Norwich has its own *Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS)*, prepared by the County Council. Originally published in October 2004, this document has subsequently been updated to reflect changing national policy. The most recent amendments appear to have been made in 2010. It seems that it will be renewed again as part of the preparation of LPT4. NATS stresses the need to retain and foster economic vitality.

NATS prioritises travel by active means and public transport. It includes a package of measures to control congestion on orbital and radial routes, with the intention of improving public transport reliability. It supports economic growth by improving access to strategic employment sites. NATS aims to discourage through traffic from the city centre.

All walking, cycling and public transport routes distinguish 'core' routes from others.

Transport for Norwich is a programme of work to improve accessibility by all forms of transport around the city. The aim is to encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking, while also improving the capacity of the road network, in particular through the construction of the Northern Distributor Road. It is also designed to stabilise traffic levels and as a result improve air quality around the city.

Transport for Norwich is a partnership between Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council, as well as local authorities within Greater Norwich on schemes in the wider area. Funding is from sources including the Department for Transport, developer contributions, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and local growth funds.

With plans for 30,000 new homes and jobs in Greater Norwich over the next decade, new infrastructure is needed to prepare the area for this growth in population by connecting new and existing communities to centres of employment.

Principal policy measures

Priority maintenance to pedestrian and cycle routes in the built-up area. Improving operating conditions for public transport through bus priority lanes and traffic signals, combined with restrictions on general traffic.

Better use of new technologies for monitoring and maintenance. This includes widespread use of sensors to monitor and adjust flows.

Continued pedestrianisation of the city centre, with further streets being designated for bus and cycle only. Traffic will be routed away from streets carrying heavy pedestrian volumes.

A new bus station and priority bus routes in the city centre.

First Low Emission Zone outside London, was introduced in 2008/9.

Two new river bridges have improved access to the city centre for pedestrian and cyclists.

Parking policy in the city centre and residential areas sounds very similar to York.

The Postwick Hub on the Northern Distributor Road may be an interesting model. This improved junction will provide a significant boost to the local economy, unlocking already approved planning permissions for 1,600 homes and 5,000 jobs, and a potential £80m in private investment.

Modal shares

A baseline may be in the Evidence report which is not available online. The LTP does not specify the modal shares to be achieved.

In Norwich, the aim is to stabilise traffic levels in order to improve air quality. Walking and cycling routes will be increased. Faster buses, linking specific employment zones, e.g. the airport, will be introduced to reduce car use.

Key performance measures

The LTP does not specify any measures.

Provision for disabled travellers

LTP4 specifically mentions encouraging accessibility for all, especially for disabled people.

Norwich has a system of 'talking bus stops' with RNIB React software at the P&R sites. At the bus station is a tactile map with audio information. It also has a system of Braille bus hailers.

5% of parking spaces at the entrance to new developments should be reserved for disabled drivers, including provision for outside vehicles.

Disability awareness training is provided for all transport operators.

The City Council runs a Blue Badge parking scheme

https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20008/parking/1086/blue_badge_parking_permit

Blue Badge parking is not permitted in pedestrian streets at any time.

There is an active local access group <http://www.norwichaccessgroup.org.uk/page3.shtml>

3. Relevance to York

Useful lessons and pointers

LTP3 and LTP4 both have a strong environmental component. The Local Transport Plan will be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal which assesses the environmental, social and economic impacts of the plan, and factors that can mitigate any negative impacts. A Scoping Document identifies the scope and level of detail of information to be included in the Sustainability Appraisal (use this link).

NCC is a leader in highways maintenance and tackling congestion (National Highway Transportation Survey).

NCC won a Transforming Cities bid to improve public transport. It is involved in the Cycle City Ambition programme. An extensive network of community transport complements the commercial operations.

All new development proposals should be based on a consideration of sustainable transport. This will limit car use and maximise the benefits of limited transport investments. LPT4 sees upgraded broadband as a way to reduce travel.

A Safer and Healthier Journeys to School project is linked to school travel plans.

Urban Bus Challenge funding has been used to develop orbital bus routes – most traditional services operate along the radials.

NCC examined the potential for light rapid transit, but opted for buses on the grounds of cost and impact on the historic environment.

Consideration has been given to the formation of a Freight Quality Partnership or Urban Freight Forum.

Norwich recognises the importance of its visitor market, and therefore the importance of top-quality signage and travel information.

Norwich City Council has taken powers under the Traffic Management Act and takes civil enforcement very seriously.

Traffic calming measures are designed to reduce speeds on all roads categorised as 'access roads' to under 20mph.

Any aspects which make it less relevant to York

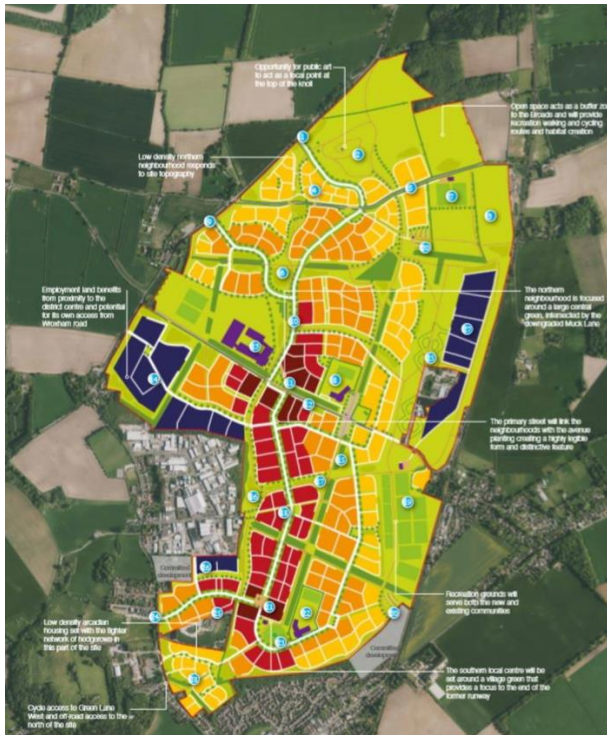
Not being a unitary authority, Norwich's transport planning tends to be dominated by the concerns of its rural hinterland. This tends to be car-dominated.

Norwich is larger than York. It has an international airport. It is quite remote from other large urban areas. It has two complete ring roads and a third now almost complete - comprising northern and southern by-passes.

Demonstrator new neighbourhoods

The planned extension at Bowthorpe (population just under 12,000), to the west of the city, is now largely complete. It comprises three neighbourhoods and an industrial estate, all linked to the city by frequent bus.

Rackheath Eco Settlement proposes just over 5,000 homes. There is a Master Plan, and the aim is to be carbon-neutral. It would connect to the city by road and the P&R, and by rail via new station. Modal split would also be affected by bus-gating and new cycle tracks.



Best practice in engagement and consultation

NCC commissioned an evidence report, drawing together statistics, traffic data and research. This informed public consultation on the best scenarios to test.

Policy 4 of the new LTP deals with achieving the required behavioural changes to support the use of sustainable transport.

LTP4 was subjected to extensive consultation with the public, stakeholders and special interest groups. This lasted 6 weeks, and focused on expressing priorities. The consultation involved Norfolk Youth Parliament, and attempted to engage with under 18s.

Additional research was commissioned on environmental impacts, providing a basis for consultation with statutory environment bodies. Research was commissioned to assess the impact of various policy measures on carbon emissions.

Possible contacts

The role of Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services (Tom McCabe) includes Highways and Transport.

The person responsible for the LTP is David Cumming, Strategic Transport Team Manager, Infrastructure Development, Community and Environmental Services
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Author: John Stevens V2.1 21st May 2021