

PRESS RELEASE

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Norwich Society calls for implementation of Immediate Measures to Support Cycling and Walking.

In this new phase of Covid recovery, we are having to look at how we can remain safely socially distanced on the daily commute.

The government has identified walking and cycling as playing key roles in the post-lockdown commuting strategy, and locally councillors have within the last couple days spoken about the need to quickly adopt green travel measures identified in the ongoing Transport for Norwich project.

The Norwich Society has long recognised and advocated measures to increase walking and cycling as an essential part of a sustainable transport policy for Norwich, and has encouraged the City Council and Transport Authority of the County in its application of such measures. There is now even more urgency to bringing forward measures to encourage walking and cycling, preferably before vehicular traffic levels return to their previous unmanageable levels.

The Society therefore urges the local authorities urgently to proceed with implementation of the following measures:

1. The creation of dedicated, wide cycle lanes on the main arterial roads entering and leaving central Norwich. This should include adequate contraflow arrangements on the one-way roads, such as at New Botolph Street. And clear signposted cycle routes into the city centre from the existing Park and Ride and outer carpark sites.
2. Pedestrianisation of more streets in central Norwich as shared surfaces for cycling and walking. To assist in reducing traffic, essential goods deliveries should be limited to specified hours, and private car access should be limited to designated car parks, preferably focused outside the inner ring road.
3. Closure of roads in the immediate vicinity of schools at drop off and collection times to allow safe access and encourage walking and cycling to school.
4. Additional free secure bicycle parking in Norwich; for example, turning the Chantry Car Park into a bicycle parking area. And City Council led plans for the creation of city centre cycle hubs with showers, lockers and training in bike maintenance and cycling skills.

Businesses should be encouraged to look consider what space they have available on their premises for cycle parking.

5. The provision of bicycle repair vouchers up to say £50 per cyclist, that can be redeemed at bicycle repairs at city centre repair shops (this is for example a scheme that is being made available in Paris to encourage cycling).

There are many longer terms projects identified in the Transport for Norwich plan and Whitehall has announced more funding will be available for them over the next 5 years.

Norwich has one of the highest proportions of pedestrian commuters outside London, and is of a size that makes walking and cycling from even the outer extents relatively viable as a means of commuting. However, before this pandemic 85% of car journeys in Greater Norwich were single occupancy journeys!

Changing our commuting habits has long been important to improving our environment, but never has it been more essential to our personal health and the economic vitality of the city centre.

491 words