

Text from most recent email exchange between Chris Stebbing – EVRA Chairman, and Billy Fox –Transport for Norwich re: Eaton and Cringleford Phase 2 Works.

Received 20 December 2017

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your email below.

For ease of review, please see my responses in red (below) to each of your points raised.

I trust this information is useful.

Kind Regards

Billy Fox BSc (Hons) IEng MCIHT

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From: Chris Stebbing [<mailto:EVRA.VC@live.co.uk>]

Sent: 17 December 2017 17:26

To: Fox, Billy <billy.fox@norfolk.gov.uk>

Copy recipients included: Eaton Councillors, EVRA Committee Members, and various other officers at City and County Halls. Email Addresses

Removed by Chris Stebbing

Subject: Re: Comments on Eaton and Cringleford Phase 2

Billy Fox - Transport for Norwich

It is over two months since the proposed works for Eaton and Cringleford Phase 2 were postponed and I wondered where things have got to. I have not had any contact from you on this matter since October and, as far as I am aware, nor have our Councillors. It would be helpful to have an update on the project so that I can inform Residents as to what is happening through our website and Facebook pages. We distribute our Newsletter twice a year and our next issue is

not due to be delivered to Residents until end of March but our social media feeds have a good reach amongst Residents.

Response from Billy Fox: Over the last few months our Contractor has been finalising their forward works programme for all the highway schemes due to be delivered within 2018 / 2019 across the entire County. We have been working closely with them to reschedule the Eaton Phase 2 works within this programme, which will take place in the Summer of 2018. Once we have a start date finalised we will update you and Councillors ahead of distributing this information to the local residents and businesses in the new year. We will also be working closely with Charlotte in communications to ensure this message reaches as wider audience as possible. We intend to work closely with you to make sure any key information is captured in your issue of the newsletter in March.

As offered previously we stand ready to meet with you to discuss any proposals and provide feedback on these from a Resident's perspective.

Response from Billy Fox: The details of this scheme are now finalised – we have appreciated your input to date however the focus is now on delivery of the NHAC-approved project. Further to our meeting on the 7th July at County Hall we have been in comprehensive dialog regarding a series of points raised during the meeting and thereafter via email. These points have been carefully investigated and responded to accordingly, some of which has led to further alterations to the proposals. We have clearly explained these during our correspondence, along with the limitations to some of your desired changes, given various constraints.

When Councillors and I met with you in June the timescale for the Eaton Hill slip road closure was 18 days but by October this had risen to 40 days. The original period of closure would have presented significant problems for residents and businesses in Eaton Village but the proposed 40 days is clearly totally unacceptable. Given the track record of Transport for Norwich on other works, such as Bluebell Road and Newmarket Road which both overran by some three weeks, it would be difficult to have any confidence in any timetable for the Eaton Phase 2 works. If the works take place during the winter months then there is an even higher risk of these being delayed by adverse weather especially as these include extensive groundworks alongside the dual carriageway. If you do intend to proceed with these works then we would like to see a plan that includes long-day and weekend working to demonstrate that TfN are really committed to minimising the time to complete the works.

Response from Billy Fox: Again, we are working with our Contractor to consider ways to reduce the timescales / durations of each phase of works to improve efficiency and minimise disruption where possible. However the option and theory of doubling the resource on a particular phase or section of works to

reduce the overall duration does not generally apply, particularly when working along a short length or smaller working area. Often it's the case that the resource can be increased, but given the nature of the works and the various operations on-site that need to take place (eg material curing times) the presence of more resources onsite will often not decrease the duration of work. Delivering the scheme during the Summer period presents the possibility of longer working days (extended daylight hours) and will reduce the risk of the programme overrunning as a result of any unforeseen adverse weather conditions that are more likely to occur in the Winter months.

The impact on residents and, in particular bus services, would be significant. You said that alternative temporary services were being looked at but these need to address all services for Eaton Village and not just the Konect Bus 5A or the Cringleford services. Businesses rely on customers from other areas who in turn rely on the bus service to and from Eaton Village to reach the shops and businesses and Post Office. There are also many residents who use the bus services from the Cellar House stop to attend appointments at the Hospital. How would they be catered for?

Response from Billy Fox: A meeting was held at County Hall with Konect Bus, First Bus and representatives from our Travel and Transport department on the 4th October 2017 to discuss the impacts on their services. Once we have the new start date we will be fully engaging with planning the replacement bus services in the new year. We will also be working closely with our Travel and Transport colleagues who deal directly with the bus companies to ensure reasonable measures and travel information are in place ahead of the construction works being carried out. Once we have more information on this, I will update you accordingly.

There are other concerns about the scope of these works and whilst you say that these are not being cancelled are you looking again at the viability of aspects of these? There are improvements to the Eaton Street cross roads that are essential such as setting back the stop line on Bluebell Road to enable buses and long vehicles to turn more easily. Setting back the stop line on Church Lane would also be helpful having experienced the 5A bus service trying to negotiate this. Resurfacing of the Eaton Crossroads is also an urgent job.

Response from Billy Fox: I can confirm that the setting back of the stop line into Bluebell Road to enable buses and long vehicles to turn more easily still remains as part of the proposals as does the carriageway resurfacing of the Eaton Crossroads junction. However the setting back of the stop line further into Church Lane is not feasible given the location of the access at the back of Waitrose adjoining Church Lane at this point. This would mean effectively having an uncontrolled access at this point within the traffic signalised junction, meaning any vehicle exiting this access would not be included within the

phasing of the lights, consequently creating an unsafe scenario which cannot be controlled by the traffic signals.

Residents, especially those who are cyclists, have concerns about the proposed cycle path on Eaton Hill and in particular the need to cut across traffic coming down the slip road to reach the cycle path. Although this will be re-designated as a 20mph Zone we know that vehicles entering the Village will not slow down coming off the Newmarket Road. The proposed works will not improve what is an existing danger point. Looking at the scheme again I suggest that the existing cycle path is left as is (other than resurfacing to fix the pothole left by Anglian Water earlier in the year) since it provides a segregated space for cyclist in either direction. The proposed works will not really add much to the width and come at a very high price for the community. The finances released could be used for creating cycle paths in other areas where they would deliver greater benefits. I would also be interested to hear if any considerations were given to combining the existing cycle path with the footpath to create a shared cycle/pedestrian path as you have done for the other sections along Newmarket Road, Bluebell Road and elsewhere? Such an approach would seem to require a much shorter period of closure (if any) and have much less of an impact on residents. Why have you settled on a different approach for the mere 200metres of pathway along Eaton Hill at a point which is guaranteed to cause maximum inconvenience for the community during closure of the slip road for any works?

Response from Billy Fox: With the introduction of the 20mph zone and reduction in carriageway width as a result of widening the cycle path facility, this should encourage vehicle speeds to be reduced given the narrower alignment and lesser carriageway space available. An important outcome of the scheme is the provision of a fully compliant two way contra flow cycle path at this location. Currently the cycle path width does not meet the requirements for two way flow, especially when considering the steep gradient of the hill as the envelope required for a cyclist travelling uphill is greater than that when travelling on a flat even surface. Given the steepness of the hill where the existing segregated cycle path / footway currently exists, cycle speeds coming down the hill will be far greater than on a level terrain, therefore this would create a potential safety issue if this area was to be a shared space, particularly when considering those using the route into Eaton who may be visually impaired and unable to negotiate higher cycle speeds. Nevertheless, given the restricted total width along the slip road itself any alterations / improvements made on the slope road are likely to require a closure to ensure the essential safety zones are in place to protect the workforce and members of the public during the works.

With respect to the Cringleford Phase 1 of the works I have some observations on the timing of traffic lights on the bridge which have impacted on the area. Yesterday (Saturday) traffic was queued back from the bridge beyond the traffic lights at Eaton Street crossroads causing problems for traffic entering from

Bluebell Road and Church Lane. This doesn't happen often but there does appear to be a timing and control issue which would need to be addressed along with the phasing of lights for the Eaton Phase2 works. Also, I and other cyclists have experienced the lights on the opposite side of Cringleford Bridge changing before we have crossed the bridge and vehicles starting to come towards us. In all cases we have crossed on green lights but apparently just before these changed. It would seem that insufficient time is given for a cyclist to cross between the start of the amber phase and oncoming traffic given a green light. It is only a few seconds but it does put cyclists at risk. I would normally cycle at around 12mph. Maybe other cyclists have reported this to you.

Response from Billy Fox: I have passed these observations onto our Traffic Signals team who are best placed to investigate the concerns you have raised regarding the timing of the lights on the Cringleford Bridge. Once I have a response on this, I will come back to you.

Once again I would like to raise the matter of the phasing of traffic lights at Eaton Street Crossroads. EVRA and Councillors asked you to include a dedicated phase of the traffic lights that would enable vehicles to turn right into Church Lane without oncoming traffic but you have rejected that reasonable request. We continue to believe that this is an essential improvement that would be of benefit to Residents.

Response from Billy Fox: As previously clarified, due to the very low numbers of vehicles which travel straight ahead from Eaton Street (from south-west) into Eaton Street (north-east toward the A11 slip road) the proposed ahead and right turn lane (as per the existing) is predicted to mostly carry traffic wishing to turn right into Church Lane. This means no separate lane is required and indeed there is insufficient carriageway width to achieve this. The request of a subsequent early release for eastbound vehicles (turning into Church Lane) would effectively mean separately controlling the eastbound, followed then by the westbound vehicles, which would be less efficient for the junction as a whole. This scenario has been considered and modelled by our Traffic Signal specialists and the results show that at peak times the junction would be over capacity when considering this proposal, which could result in significant additional queuing on Bluebell Road, Eaton Street westbound slip road and Church Lane. However some elements of the proposed scheme do offer advantages over the current situation albeit that the fundamental traffic signal staging remains the same (apart from the cycle release), which are:

- Lining within the junction will be improved, making it clearer where vehicles should be positioned when waiting to turn right and visibility of oncoming vehicles will be maximised.
- Additional vehicle detection will be in place to detect right turning vehicles which will extend the safe period for vehicles that have already crossed the stop line to exit to Church Lane or Bluebell Road.

- In addition to the above we will amend the stage sequence so that Church Lane follows after Eaton Street instead of the pedestrian crossings, so that this further reduces the risk of late right turning vehicles being in conflict with pedestrians starting to cross.

It is conceivable that a green right turn indicative arrow could be provided to give some time for waiting right turning vehicles which have been unable complete the turn in gaps in the opposing traffic flow from the slip road during the standard green time (during stage 1). A right green arrow for a few seconds would allow those waiting vehicles to proceed unopposed. As previously mentioned, this will be something monitored and considered by our Traffic Signals team.

I look forward to receiving your response on these matters so that I can update Residents of Eaton Village.

Regards

Chris Stebbing

Eaton Village Residents Association - Chairman

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