

**New Anglia Transport Board**  
**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020**

**Agenda Item 3**

---

**Impact of Covid-19 on transport**

---

Author: Laura Waters

**Summary**

This paper provides a summary of the impacts Covid-19 has had on various modes of transport, which will help in understanding the most critical areas and begin to develop a plan for the short, medium and longer terms interventions required for a strong recovery.

**Recommendation**

The Transport Board is asked to:

- Feedback on the challenges and opportunities the situation presents
- Identify measures/actions needed in both the shorter and longer terms to address the most critical areas

**Background**

At the start of 2020, Norfolk and Suffolk businesses, education providers, local authorities, the voluntary and community sector and the LEP had a clear vision, ambitions and plan to drive economic growth across Norfolk and Suffolk, which is set out in Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy.

This remains our ambition despite the impact of Covid-19. It will be a greater challenge and we will need to identify opportunities through transport infrastructure, which could make significant advances in some areas of the economy. We will need to adjust to new way of working to support our economy to be agile and responsive to these challenges and opportunities.

Impacts on the transport network since the lockdown measures include a significant reduction in traffic flows on our strategic road network with a decrease to 19% compared to same period in 2019, all fixed wing passenger flights except for one service stopped at Norwich Airport and First Buses are carrying around 10-15% of normal passenger numbers.

Moving forward we will need to consider how best to recover from these impacts, identifying which measures and actions are required to address the most critical areas and ensuring transport infrastructure grows stronger. We will also need to consider the implications of the guidance Government published on the 12 May 2020 setting out how operators can provide

safer workplaces and services for themselves, their workers and passengers across all modes of private and public transport.

### **Summary of feedback received:**

The feedback on the impact of Covid-19 on transport infrastructure appears to be focussed on four key themes:

1. Understanding the level of service required and the ability to increase passenger numbers to sustain business, whilst maintaining social distancing measures
2. Clear direction from government on their commitment to existing projects and what funding will look like in the future?
3. How to capture benefits such as the improvements in air quality and increased walking and cycling the restrictions have created?
4. Building public confidence around using public transport

Detailed comments included:

- Delivery of schemes has been temporarily paused – investigating impact of this pause where the funding comes from DfT because the money awarded may not have been spent in the original timeframe for the grant.
- Business case work on major projects is able to progress.
- Being extremely careful of tasks such as surveying, which require accessing land to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- Fees for design work etc could be higher due to staff availability.
- Potential issue in respect of major projects and the timing of future announcements/decisions - it would be useful to have some assurances / indications from government about their intentions. That is, will they continue to be able to honour existing programme commitments or is Covid-19 likely to lead to reductions in infrastructure funding programmes?
- People are driving less, but how do we ensure car use does not increase rapidly once lockdown is eased (which has been seen in Wuhan).
- Walking and cycling levels have increased significantly – how do we harness these increases?
- The three Ports in East Anglia have all been fully operational with volumes in the main buoyant, but clearly with some peaks and troughs.
- All fixed wing passenger flights except for a daily Aberdeen service (Mon to Fri) stopped by 27th March.
- Offshore gas helicopter traffic is continuing at about 50% of predicted pre Covid 19 levels due to the required social distancing measures required.
- Changes to bus timetables to reflect the reduction in travellers and First Bus are carrying around 10-15% the normal number of passengers.
- Results from the Liftshare commuter survey found almost half (48%) of its members will be changing the way they travel to work after the lockdown lifts. Opportunities to help organisations safely return people to work using technology to assess commuter routes and advise employees on the best routes to work in relation to social distancing.
- The Liftshare commuter survey found their members have significantly increased working from home (552%), increased cycling (71%) and increased walking (8%).

## **Identifying measures and actions to address critical areas**

There will be different phases of recovery as the lock down is lifted gradually and impact different parts of the economy at different times meaning we will need to consider short and long term interventions some of which may need to be specific to a particular mode of transport but also explore opportunities for interventions that work across multiple transport areas.

It is important that our approach considers the transition between response, restart and rebuild and be agile to the possibility that we may need to transition back into response if there are further lock downs.

As part of this discussion we can:

- Use the Economic Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy to identify relevant activities that can assist in recovery planning
- Assess local and central government funding opportunities and gaps
- Consider new interventions that will support opportunities around for example skills and training
- Use the safer transport – guidance for operators published by government, and consider the implications of suggestions such as: Re-deploying vulnerable employees, use of screens and barriers, eliminating face to face seating, staggering departure times and undertaking joint planning with other transport organisations.

## **Recommendation**

The Transport Board is asked to:

- Feedback on the challenges and opportunities the situation presents
- Identify measures/actions needed in both the shorter and longer terms to address the most critical areas