

# EDT Committee

Item No.

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Major Infrastructure Improvements</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>15 September 2017</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> The County Council, at its meeting in December 2016, agreed a motion setting out that the 'Council recognises the vital importance of improving our transport infrastructure and that this will help to deliver the new jobs and economic growth that is needed in the years ahead.' In addition the motion set out that the 'Council also recognises the importance of giving a clear message of its infrastructure priorities to the government and its agencies, and so ensure that there is universal recognition of their importance to the people of Norfolk.' Three projects were identified as priorities for the coming years; Great Yarmouth 3 <sup>rd</sup> River Crossing; Norwich Western Link; Long Stratton bypass.	

## Executive summary

This report sets out an update on the progress to date for the three priority infrastructure projects being undertaken by the county council. It includes detail on the Great Yarmouth 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing. This has the most developed case having recently completed the submission of an outline business case to the DfT to seek funding as a large local major project.

This report also includes updates on the progress of the Norwich Western Link (NWL) and the work undertaken since the last committee report. The next stages that need to be considered and funded will be set out in a more detailed report to this committee at the next meeting in October.

The Long Stratton bypass is also being progressed, primarily by the main developer, following the adoption of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan (AAP) in May 2016. A separate bid for funding has been made by the council for an improvement scheme for the Hempnall cross-road junction.

Other A47 improvements are being led by Highways England (HE) and form part of their Roads Investment Strategy programme(s). This report provides an overview of the projects being delivered, setting out details following the Preferred Route Announcements by HE in August 2017.

### Recommendations:

- 1. Members are asked to note and comment on the progress of the infrastructure projects provided in this report.**
- 2. Members are asked to note the decision made regarding the continuation of the Great Yarmouth 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing project at risk ahead of confirmation of funding by DfT as set out in Appendix B to this report.**

## 1. Proposal

### 1.1. Great Yarmouth 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing

During 2016 a submission was made to DfT to seek funding to develop the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing (3RC) as part of a fast track programme of the Local Major Projects funding. This bid was successful and £1m was approved by DfT to support the development of the OBC with a deadline for submission of 31 March 2017.

- 1.2. A report was presented to EDT Committee on 17 March 2017 seeking approval to submit the OBC. Following this approval the submission was made to DfT on 30 March 2017 with a hoped for decision to grant the project 'Programme Entry' status by July 2017. Unfortunately, due to the national elections this date has slipped and a new approval date is awaited from DfT.
- 1.3. As Committee will be aware, the project will provide a new opening bridge (proposed in the OBC as a bascule bridge) over the River Yare. It links directly from Harfreys Roundabout at the A47 (formally the A12) and connects across the river to South Denes Road at a new signal junction.
- 1.4. The 3RC provides significantly improved access to the town centre and importantly to the port enterprise zone and outer harbour areas. As a 3<sup>rd</sup> crossing, it also provides much needed network resilience for the town, and takes pressure off of the existing main route into the town and port via either Haven Bridge or Fuller's Hill.
- 1.5. Norwich Western Link  
A report was taken to EDT Committee in July 2016 (Link) setting out initial work to assess options and next steps for the project. A Member working Group has also been overseeing the work being undertaken and has reported to Committee on a regular basis.
- 1.6. The report outlined a range of work to be completed during the remainder of 2016 and first half of 2017 to further develop the case for the Western Link. This work is due to be reported in more detail to EDT Committee on 20 October 2017.
- 1.7. Long Stratton Bypass  
The A140 provides an important link between the two key regional centres of Norwich and Ipswich. The road is currently mostly single carriageway until it meets the A14 trunk road dual carriageway. There is also a short section of dual carriageway at Diss. There have been calls for decades from the Long Stratton community and users of the A140 for a bypass due to the delay and disruption that travelling through the village creates.
- 1.8. A new dual carriageway design was developed and was close to delivery in 2005, however a lack of funds resulted in this option not being delivered. The preferred route alignment of this option still exists, however in May 2016 an updated Area Action Plan (AAP) was adopted and has established an alternative bypass solution linked to the delivery of significant housing growth in Long Stratton. The plan provides for 1800 new homes and commercial development areas. 600 of the homes are located on the west side of the A140 (to the north of the village) and 1200 are allocated to the east side of the village, along with the main commercial development allocation.
- 1.9. The adopted plan sets out that the provision of a new bypass on the east side of the village must be included as part of the development allocation. It states that: "The bypass will be completed before 250 of the new homes are occupied." and "Given that the bypass is necessary in order to enable housing development to take place on LNGS1, a substantive element of funding is expected to come from the developer."

## **2. Project Progress**

- 2.1. Great Yarmouth 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing

The 3RC Outline Business Case (OBC) submitted to DfT in March 2017 is a comprehensive set of documents that sets out the five tests that DfT consider when evaluating a project for funding. These cover the strategic case, the economic case, financial case, commercial case and management case. More detail is provided in the master document which is published on the county council's website – follow this [LINK](#).

- 2.2. Whilst there has been a delay in the funding decision from DfT, the project has continued to be delivered in line with the overall delivery programme. The programme sets out a construction start date of Autumn 2020 and this remains the target date. The next major process is to undertake a further round of consultation to develop the details of the bridge ahead of submitting the formal application for the necessary Orders to deliver the project. The latest consultation process is being carried out during September, with closing dates for feedback in October 2017.
- 2.3. The key questions in the consultation relate to the design of the bridge, and seek to develop a greater understanding of what stakeholders think is important. We are aware, following further work with stakeholders, that there are concerns regarding the height and operation of the bridge and the possible impacts on their businesses. There is a need to find the right balance for river traffic and road traffic, and the work to date includes for the bridge opening as needed by commercial river traffic, which still also provides significant benefits for road traffic. Details of the consultation boards are included at Appendix A.
- 2.4. In addition to the consultation progress, work has also been undertaken to move forward with the procurement process for the project. Initial work has included an 'industry day' to gather together those contractors and consultants who have an interest in being involved in the project. This event, held on 4 July 2017 was well attended and received positive feedback from those attending. It enabled more focussed discussion around the type of contract, the scope of the work, the range of information that will need to be provided at tender stages and the level of interest in the project.
- 2.5. From the industry day, it is apparent that there is a good level of interest in the project, however key to maintaining this will be the scale and scope of the procurement process, which needs to be carefully considered. The project team are working with the Head of Procurement to ensure a high quality process is developed and delivered. More details on this will be reported to future committees for approvals before the procurement process formally commences, which is expected in January 2018.
- 2.6. Norwich Western Link  
Mouchel (now WSP) was appointed to review work previously undertaken on a NWL, and to assess the need for intervention in this area. They have reviewed available evidence, engaged with local Parish Councils and met with statutory environmental bodies to consider:
  - The need for transport intervention in the western quadrant of Norwich;
  - The case for a Western Link, including a review of previously identified issues and objectives;
  - Local considerations that could influence the project including the NDR and associated mitigation measures, Highways England's plans to dual the A47 between Easton and North Tuddenham, environmental designations and the development of Local Plan;
  - The possible options to progress; and
  - How any assessment could be taken forward.
- 2.7. It is proposed to bring a further report to this Committee at on 20 October. This will set out progress to date (focussing particularly on work completed since

Committee in June 2016) and provide details for the next steps for the project and the funding required to continue the delivery of the project.

2.8. Long Stratton Bypass

The County Council (NCC) has been working with South Norfolk District Council (SNDC) with the aim of jointly developing the Long Stratton bypass proposals with the developer. Most of the work to date has however been undertaken by the developer team and they have indicated that they are likely to submit a planning application in November 2017 that sets out details for the bypass and the adjacent development areas (in line with the allocations included in the adopted AAP). On receipt of the planning application, both NCC and SNDC will formally review and respond to the details.

2.9. A140 Hempnall junction

This junction originally formed part of the bypass solution that was developed in 2005. However the revised and now adopted AAP provides for a new bypass alignment that does not extend as far north as the Hempnall junction, therefore this scheme is now being considered separately to the bypass.

2.10. More recently the DfT has provided scope for bids to be submitted to the National Productivity Investment Fund for 2018/19 and 2019/20 for road and related network funding.

2.11. Meetings have been held with the landowners and developer near the Hempnall junction and they are content to make the land available and have signed an agreement confirming this and provided a letter that also supports the funding bid. The bid for just over £3m was submitted by the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 deadline, and the funding announcements are expected in October 2017.

### **3. Financial Implications**

3.1. Great Yarmouth 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing

The OBC submission sets out the financial position for the project. The future cost of delivering the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing, including allowances for risk and inflation is estimated at £121m (at out-turn prices). The project will also give rise to costs for annual operation and maintenance, and for the long term renewal of the infrastructure, with an annual average cost of approximately £260k. The Council will be required to meet the ongoing costs of operation, maintenance and renewal.

3.2. The County Council is seeking a contribution of £98m from the DfT towards the capital costs of the scheme, and the Council will support this with a further local contribution of £22m. A total of £4.9m has been spent up to the submission of the OBC, including £3.8m by the County Council.

3.3. The consultation referred to in paragraph 2.3 above will include details shown at Appendix A. The results of the consultation and any related implications for the project delivery will be brought back to Committee for consideration in November as part of making any decisions regarding the preferred design solution.

3.4. Following submission of the OBC it was hoped that a decision would be provided by Ministers before the close of parliament in July. However, due to the general election this date has slipped. Previously committee had agreed to continue the project to maintain its delivery programme up to the confirmation of a funding decision from DfT. Given the delay, an interim position has been agreed with the Chair of EDT Committee to continue developing the project until a decision is received from DfT. The details previously agreed with the Chair are included at Appendix B. We remain hopeful that an announcement regarding funding of the project will be received during September. If this is delayed beyond this date, a further note will be provided to the Chair and will be reported to Committee.

### 3.5. Norwich Western Link

In terms of a new link road connecting the A47 west and A1067, a previous scoping study noted that the costs of a road scheme could be between £28m-£106m (at 2014 prices), depending on the route chosen and the form of the road (single or dual carriageway).

- 3.6. Some further work has been completed and is expected to be finalised and reported in more detail to EDT Committee in October 2017. This is currently anticipated to confirm that there is a case to continue with the delivery of the NWL project, however given the scale of the project and the scope of work required to comply with the necessary statutory and other processes, funding is being sought to support the delivery of the project through its next phases.

### 3.7. Long Stratton Bypass

A detailed scheme for the bypass is still to be provided by the developer and until this is completed (as part of a wider master-planning and planning application process) it is not possible to determine the cost of the project. At this time it is also not possible to determine the level of funding that the development will provide towards the cost of the bypass.

### 3.8. Hempnall cross-roads

The funding bid announcement is anticipated in October 2017. If this is successful then this junction improvement will be able to be progressed and delivered during 2017/18 and 2018/19. However, if the bid is unsuccessful, alternative funding sources will then need to be found to enable the scheme to progress.

## 4. **Issues, risks and innovation**

- 4.1. Robust risk management arrangements are in place for the 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing and are being developed for the Norwich Western Link ahead of the next stages of work for that project. Arrangements are still being developed for the delivery of Long Stratton Bypass, working with the main developer. Each project will identify, quantify, manage and review risks, including financial risks as they are progressed.

- 4.2. Separate to the delivery of the key infrastructure projects, Highways England are progressing their programme of Road Investment Strategy projects. As part of their current phase 1 funding, the projects being progressed in Norfolk are:

- Easton to North Tuddenham dual carriageway
- Thickthorn major junction improvement
- Blofield to Burlingham dual carriageway
- Vauxhall roundabout junction improvement at Great Yarmouth
- Gapton Hall roundabout junction improvement at Great Yarmouth

- 4.3. Highways England have recently made their preferred route announcements for these projects. These consisted of:

- Easton to North Tuddenham Option 2, which broadly follows the existing route alignment, but moves the road slightly north as it passes Honingham and slightly south as it passes Hockering. This will provide the advantage of retaining the existing local road network, which should also minimise the impact of the project during construction. No junction strategy has been provided and this is to be developed as part of the detailed design work which will be consulted during 2018. More details can be seen via this [link](#).
- Thickthorn junction improvement is for a new link from the A11 northbound to the A47 eastbound, and from the A47 westbound to the

A11 southbound. The alignment removes significant traffic from the existing Thickthorn roundabout and this will remain largely unchanged as a result. This approach should also minimise disruption during construction. The exact details relating to the local road arrangements for Cantley Lane are to be consulted further with residents. More details can be seen via this [link](#).

- Blofield to Burlingham Option 4, which follows a route just south of the existing A47. This will retain the existing local road network and will minimise disruption during construction. More details can be seen via this [link](#).
- Vauxhall roundabout in Great Yarmouth consists of an enlarged oval roundabout, with a new bridge over the railway line to improve overall capacity. It is suggested that the junction will be signalised to balance traffic flows. This proposal includes the delivery of a new right turn out of the existing railway station/Asda junction – which has potential to be delivered early during 2018, possibly by NCC, funded by HE. More details can be seen via this [link](#) for Vauxhall and Gapton roundabouts.
- Gapton roundabout in Great Yarmouth is primarily an upgrade of the traffic signal operation, with minimal changes to the overall layout of the junction.

4.4. The A47 projects promoted by HE will have an impact on the key infrastructure projects being delivered by the county council, particularly the 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing and the Norwich Western Link. For both of these projects the county council is working closely with HE to ensure wherever possible the impacts and implications of their delivery is as coordinated as it can be, but still taking into account and respecting the statutory processes and timelines around each project. Implications will be reported via Member Groups and committee meetings as the projects progress.

4.5. The 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing and A47 Vauxhall junction improvements are progressing along similar timescales and there will be a need to coordinate the planned works to ensure the construction of each project is well managed and minimises disruption to the road network in and around Great Yarmouth.

4.6. The Norwich Western Link project is following behind the A47 Easton to North Tuddenham proposals. It will therefore be important to work closely with HE to ensure the implications of this scheme are considered. The next stages for the HE project will be to develop more design detail along the preferred route of the A47 improvement and develop the associated junction strategy. The county council team will remain engaged and working with HE as these details are developed. Implications on timing and next steps for the Norwich Western Link project will be reported to Committee at its next meeting on 20 October 2017.

## **5. Background**

5.1. Links to previous committee reports:

- EDT Committee 8 July 2016 – Follow this [link](#) (see item 9, page 25)
- B&P Committee 8 September 2017 – Follow this [link](#) (see item 10)

Great Yarmouth 3<sup>rd</sup> River Crossing – Follow this [link](#) to Outline Business Case

Links to Highways England preferred route announcement details:

- Easton to North Tuddenham via this [link](#)
- Thickthorn Junction via this [link](#)
- Blofield to Burlingham via this [link](#)

- Vauxhall and Gapton junction via this [link](#)

## **Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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