

Environment, Development and Transport Committee

Item No.

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| Report title: | A140 Long Stratton: Hempnall Crossroads Junction Improvement |
| Date of meeting: | 18 May 2018 |
| Responsible Chief Officer: | Tom McCabe - Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services |
| Strategic impact The Long Stratton Area Action Plan (LSAAP) states that an improvement to Hempnall Crossroads must be delivered early in the phasing of Long Stratton Bypass, which is identified as one of Norfolk County Council's three priority infrastructure projects. Both schemes will help to meet the objectives of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), Joint Core Strategy (JCS), the South Norfolk Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). 'Norfolk Futures: The Council's Strategy for 2018-2021' has a stated ambition of 'installing infrastructure first'. Early delivery of a new roundabout at the Hempnall junction will facilitate planned housing and employment growth in Long Stratton. | |

Executive summary

Local people, Parish Councils and elected members have requested improvements to the A140 Hempnall Crossroads junction near Long Stratton for many years. Norfolk County Council has carried out work to identify a suitable value for money scheme and secured funding for a new roundabout that will help to ease congestion, encourage economic growth, facilitate housing development, improve road safety and access and reduce delays. An improvement to this junction is required to go ahead prior to planned housing and infrastructure improvements at Long Stratton, for which planning applications have been submitted by the developers. A public consultation has been carried out which shows there is strong support for the scheme. In order to progress the project a planning application now needs to be compiled and submitted.

Recommendation:

To consider consultation responses and approve the submission of a planning application for the Hempnall Crossroads Junction Improvement scheme.

1. Proposal

1.1. In the 2016 Autumn Statement the Government announced the launch of the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF), further details of which were released in April 2017. The fund allowed Local Highway Authorities to apply for capital funding of up to 70% of a scheme's total cost for infrastructure projects promoting at least one of the following aims:

- Ease congestion and provide upgrades on important national, regional or local routes
- Unlock economic and job creation opportunities

- Enable the delivery of new housing developments

In May 2017 WSP (formerly Mouchel) were appointed by Norfolk County Council to review options for a junction improvement at Hempnall Crossroads in order to identify whether a suitable scheme could be included in a funding application. This work included a review of traffic signal and roundabout schemes in relation to operational assessment and road safety, taking into account the predicted increase in traffic flows as a result of planned development in Long Stratton. It was recommended that an application for a roundabout scheme be submitted to the NPIF. A bid for funding was submitted in June 2017 and confirmation that the bid was successful was received in October 2017.

- 1.2. The proposal sees a roundabout replacing the existing staggered crossroads, locally known as 'Hempnall Crossroads' at the junction of the A140 / B1527 Hempnall Road / C497 Bungay Road. For the Site Location Plan please refer to Appendix A and for the Consultation Plan please refer to Appendix B. The roundabout is located to the south-west of the existing junction which will help to maximise the amount of construction that can take place without disrupting traffic flows on the A140. The roundabout's position has also been influenced by feedback from the affected landowner.
- 1.3. The landowner and Norfolk County Council developed a joint Letter of Intent (28 June 2017) which sets out the Council's intention to purchase land and the landowner's intention to transfer land to the Council. NPLaw and NPS are currently concluding the details of the land transfer with the landowner's agent and legal representative.
- 1.4. In addition to the aims listed in 1.1 the scheme will also improve road safety at a junction with a history of accidents, improve access from the minor roads at the junction to the A140 and reduce delays.
- 1.5. A public consultation took place between 1 March 2018 - 10 April 2018 and was publicised in the Eastern Daily Press and on NCC's Twitter and Facebook accounts. Posters were also placed in prominent locations in the area. The consultation comprised a short questionnaire linked from the website www.norfolk.gov.uk/hempnallcrossroads which contained information on the scheme and an email link for any specific enquiries.
- 1.6. 456 responses to the online questionnaire were received with over 93% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing to the proposals. Some useful feedback was also received. Please refer to Appendix C for more detail on the consultation results.
- 1.7. Construction of the scheme is planned to start not later than Autumn 2019 and utilities companies will need to carry out work to divert their apparatus in advance of the main junction works.
- 1.8. The next step is to complete and submit the planning application for the scheme. This report requests that Committee consider the consultation responses and approve the submission of a planning application.
- 1.9. NPLaw are providing advice on the implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and the feasibility of stopping up areas of redundant carriageway. Consultation relating to TROs to implement changes to speed limits from 60mph to 50mph on the minor roads and stop up areas of redundant carriageway (where applicable) will be carried out separately with statutory consultees.

2. Evidence

- 2.1. Implementation of a roundabout rather than a signalised junction will help to keep traffic on the A140 free-flowing and provide the greatest safety benefits in terms of fewer accidents at the junction whilst also improving access from the minor arms.
- 2.2. Following identification of a suitable scheme WSP carried out additional work to support the NPIF bid including an economic assessment for the scheme. This identified a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 2.05 which demonstrates a high value for money scheme.
- 2.3. There have been local aspirations for changes to the junction for some time and improvements are supported by Richard Bacon, MP for South Norfolk; Alison Thomas, Deputy Leader of the Council and Member for Long Stratton Division, South Norfolk Council and the parish councils of Tharston and Hapton, Long Stratton, Hempnall, Shelton and Hardwick, Wacton and Fritton and Morningthorpe. Norfolk Homes and Norfolk Land Limited, who are promoting new housing and associated measures including the Long Stratton Bypass, also support the scheme.
- 2.4. It is proposed that street lighting will be provided at the roundabout due to the nature of the surrounding highway environment and the significant length of existing street lighting on the rural approach to the site. There has been one objection to the provision of street lighting. Please refer to Appendix C, items C5.20, C5.20.1 and C5.20.2 for details.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1. As part of the work carried out by WSP the total project cost was calculated at £4,358,465. The NPIF will finance 70% of this amount (£3,050,925). The remaining cost will comprise a local contribution and will be funded through a combination of developer funding, Growth Deal from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 3.2. Tarmac are involved with the development of the scheme and will provide a cost for its construction under the terms of the current highways maintenance and construction contract. The County Council will benchmark costs and consider alternative providers prior to selecting a contractor in order to ensure value for money.

4. Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1. A risk register was submitted as part of the NPIF application and is being developed as the scheme progresses. The main risks are:
 - Reaching agreement on land value and completion of land transfer
 - Failure to achieve planning permission / imposition of unexpected planning conditions
 - Unexpected complications or delay as a result of third party involvement, e.g. utilities diversions
 - Difficulties gaining approvals for traffic management proposals for the scheme and/or utilities work that may result in delays or compromise the quality of the scheme
- 4.2. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion has confirmed that an EIA under the EIA Regulations 2017 will not be required. An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey has confirmed that no further ecological surveys are warranted and *'assuming the advised mitigation measures are adopted no significant negative impacts to valued ecological receptors are expected'*. A

landscape design is underway which has taken the above documents into account.

- 4.3. The feasibility of minimising waste by reusing material from the site and processing it at a quarry located less than one mile from the site to create a cement-bound carriageway foundation is currently being investigated. This would help to reduce lorry movements and associated CO² emissions.

5. Background

- 5.1. References to the successful NPIF bid for the scheme are referred to in the previous [EDT Committee report](#) 'Highways Capital Programme and Transport Asset Management Plan' at the meeting of 19 January 2018

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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