

# Environment, Development and Transport Committee

<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Norwich Western Link Update and Consultation Proposal</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>12 October 2018</b>
<b>Responsible Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services</b>
<b>Strategic impact</b> <p>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 to 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 and the Norwich Western Link is one of these.</p>	

## Executive summary

This report sets out an update on the progress to date on the Norwich Western Link (NWL) project and the work undertaken since October 2017.

It also provides the plan for the proposed second round of consultation on a shortlist of options for the Committee’s agreement. If the consultation is approved by Committee, the Project Team will report back in November seeking approval for the shortlist of options that we will consult on.

There are a number of factors that have been and will continue to be considered as the project moves forwards. These include the opening of the Broadland Northway (formerly known as the Northern Distributor Road), the A47 dual carriageway proposal between North Tuddenham and Easton, the development of the Food Enterprise Zone (FEZ) at Easton, and the Local Plan Review.

Earlier in the year, an initial consultation was undertaken to seek views on current transport issues to the West of Norwich and what the public thought the project should consider to alleviate these. This found there was strong support for new link between the A47 and Broadland Northway.

As mentioned above this Project was agreed by Full Council and continues to have cross party support.

### Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- 1. Note the progress with the project**
- 2. Agree in principle to plan for the non-statutory consultation on shortlisting of options, which will be subject to detailed approval at the November 2018 Committee meeting.**

## **1. Proposal**

- 1.1. Officers are working on plans for a non-statutory consultation between November 2018 and January 2019 to consult on a shortlist of options to deliver the NWL.
- 1.2. The outline consultation plan is appended to this report as Appendix A.
- 1.3. Work is being undertaken to determine a shortlist of options, these will be brought to November 2018 Committee for approval.
- 1.4. The results of the consultation will be used with other work to inform the Strategic Outline Business Case for the project.

## **2. Evidence**

- 2.1. Since the update to committee on 20 October 2017, there has been an initial consultation to seek views on transport issues to the west of Norwich and what options could be considered. A consultation ran for 8 weeks from Tuesday 8 May to Tuesday 3 July 2019 with 9 staffed events. Commonplace hosted the online questionnaire on behalf of NCC and compiled a report, which is Appendix B to this report.
- 2.2. There were 2 opportunities to comment on the consultation; firstly to add general comments on transport issues; secondly to pinpoint local transport issues on an interactive map.
- 2.3. The key headline figures of this report are as follows;
  - NWL Initial views – 3,280 total visitors
  - NWL Initial views – 1,380 total contributors
  - NWL map – 1,146 total visitors
  - NWL map – 531 total contributors
- 2.4. The majority of people who took part in the consultation believe a new road linking the A47 to the Broadland Northway would help tackle transport issues in the area. This option was selected more than three times as much as the next most popular option, which was 'Improving existing roads'.
- 2.5. The original consultation report has been updated due to a discrepancy with the categories of contributions as a result of updating the platform for GDPR requirements.

Correspondence was also received from the following organisations in support of creating a link between the Broadland Northway and A47:

- > Breckland Council
- > Broadland District Council
- > Cringleford Parish Council
- > East Winch Parish Council
- > Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- > New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
- > Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital
- > Norwich City Council
- > Road Haulage Association
- > South Norfolk Council

## 2.6. Project objectives

A range of objectives have been developed to align with the current strategic objectives presented in national, regional, and local policy and associated guidance. It is considered that the objectives reflect the issues and opportunities identified within the previous project reports, in addition to the wider objectives of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, supporting the principal aim to deliver a modern and efficient transport system. The objectives are in two tiers, namely high-level objectives and specific objectives. These objectives have been discussed at meetings with local communities and are subject to ongoing refinement as the scheme advances.

High-level objectives:

*H1 Facilitate economic growth*

*H2 Support sustainable housing growth*

*H3 Improve the quality of life for local communities*

*H4 Promote an improved environment*

*H5 Improve strategic connectivity with the national transport network*

Specific objectives:

*S1 Reduce congestion and delay, and improve journey time reliability, on routes through the study area*

*S2 Improve network resilience and efficiency of the strategic and local transport network*

*S3 Reduce the number of Heavy Goods Vehicles using minor roads*

*S4 Make the transport network safer for all users (including Non-Motorised Users)*

*S5 Encourage modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport*

*S6 Provide traffic relief (and reduce noise & emissions) within residential areas*

*S7 Enable improved accessibility to existing and new housing and employment sites*

*S8 Improve emergency response times*

*S9 Improve access to green space*

*S10 Not affect the ecological integrity of the Wensum Valley SAC*

*S11 Contribute to the improved health and well-being of local residents*

*S12 Improve connectivity and accessibility to Norwich International Airport, Norwich Research Park and Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital*

## **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1. The proposal for the second round of consultation is within the scope and budget for the work to be undertaken in this financial year.

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

- 4.1. Robust risk management arrangements are in place for this project. Foreseeable significant risks have been recorded and assessed for their potential impact and how this can be mitigated. This is an ongoing process as the scheme develops whereby any new risks are considered and evolution and mitigation of existing risks is managed and reported to the Member Working Group and the Project Board.

#### 4.2. Project governance

Appropriate project governance is in place to oversee the next stages of delivery. A Project Manager is now in place to ensure the project is being delivered to programme and budget and that the relevant resources are being engaged and managed accordingly, with all risk issues and general progress reported to the Project Board, Member Working Group and Committee. The Member Working Group will continue to meet and will be informed and updated by the project manager and the board.

#### 4.3. Key Project Risks

The Norwich Western Link project is following behind the A47 North Tuddenham to Easton dualling scheme. It will therefore remain important for the project team to continue to work closely with Highways England to ensure the implications of this scheme are considered.

4.4. The opening of Broadland Northway has been monitored to determine the impact on the development of the traffic modelling. Actual observed traffic movements from summer 2018 are currently being reviewed. More comprehensive traffic surveys in Autumn 2018 will be used to further inform the modelling.

4.5. Within the NWL study area there are a number of important environmental considerations. Continued engagement is ongoing with statutory environmental bodies to ensure any options meet the strategic objectives and minimise impacts to the environment, particularly taking account of the points already made in discussion with Environment Agency and Natural England.

4.6. The proposed timing for the Local Plan Review limits what confirmed growth locations can be included with the work for the NWL. The teams responsible are in regular contact to mitigate the risk from this.

### 5. **Background**

5.1. Links to previous committee reports:

- EDT Committee 18 September 2014 – Follow this [link](#) (see item 11, page 28)
- 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)
- EDT Committee 15 September 2017 – Follow this [link](#) (item 15, page 98)
- EDT Committee 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017 – Follow this [link](#) (Reports tab)

Link to Highways England Information

- A47 North Tuddenham to Easton Improvement Scheme 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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