

Report to	Cabinet 11 July 2018	Item
Report of	Head of city development services and head of planning services	6
Subject	Response to the Norfolk County Council consultation on the Norwich Western Link	

Purpose

To consider the proposals for the Western Link which will connect the Broadland Northway (formerly the NDR) to the A47.

Recommendation

To:

- (1) advise Norfolk County Council that the city council fully supports the principal of the proposal to construct the Norwich Western link and does not wish to comment on the particular choice of route. This support is subject to;
 - a) the delivery of a programme of measures to secure significant transport improvements to encourage sustainable forms of transport as promoted by Transport for Norwich; and
 - b) an assessment of the environmental impacts on the river Wensum being carried out and a package of mitigation measures being agreed and implemented
- (2) request that the Norfolk County Council, through detailed design, ensures that the Norwich Western Link enhances the potential for walking, cycling and public transport use to ensure any potential severance effects are fully mitigated.
- (3) request that the Norfolk County Council ensures that adequate resources are made available to guarantee the long term maintenance and viability of all sustainable transport measures in the City as well as wider transport infrastructure.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority a safe, clean and low carbon city

Financial implications

None

Ward/s: Multiple Wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Stonard - sustainable and inclusive growth

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

Report

Background

1. Earlier this year Norfolk County Council completed construction of the part of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NDR) now known as the Broadland Northway which links the A47 trunk road at Postwick (to the east of the city) to the A1067 Fakenham Road (to the north-west of the city). The county council are now consulting on the principal of completing the route from the current western end of the new road to the A47 to the west of the city. The entirety of the road is outside the city boundary and lies in Broadland District Council north of the River Wensum, and in South Norfolk to the south . This report does not discuss matters of detailed design or routing as it is more appropriate for these matters to be dealt with by Broadland District Council and South Norfolk District Council and therefore only considers the principle of the proposal and the direct implications for the city.
2. The County Council are promoting a Norwich Western Link on the basis that it will give residents, businesses, visitors and people travelling through the area a number of important benefits, including:
 - Removing additional traffic from our congested suburban city streets and outer ring road west of the city
 - Adding to the benefits that dualling the A47 will bring
 - Reducing rat-running in villages to the west of Norwich, improving quality of life
 - Improving people's living environment
 - Improving links and journey time reliability to the west and north of the county
 - Improving transport links to the A47 and beyond to the Midlands (including better connectivity to Norwich airport)
 - Supporting economic growth
 - Helping to encourage investment into Norfolk and encouraging further economic growth
 - Improving connectivity to the hospital, university and major employment areas at the Norwich Research Park
3. This report suggests that further measures are required to lock in the anticipated benefits of a western link.

The role of the Western Link in overall transport strategy

4. Providing a Western link alone cannot deliver the transport needs of either the city or the growth areas and is, therefore, only part of the overall transport strategy for the Norwich Policy Area. The Transport for Norwich (TfN) strategy is 'to provide the highest possible level of access to and within the strategy area to benefit peoples' individual needs and enhance the economic health of the strategy area [and] to ensure that journeys minimise any adverse impact on people and the built and natural environment'. Consequently, the strategy contains a series of objectives that seek to minimise the impact of travel choices on the environment, promote sustainable travel and reduce pollution, CO₂ emissions, noise and

vibration from traffic; particularly in the city centre whilst improving the competitiveness and economic performance of the Norwich area as a retail, tourist and business centre.

5. Despite an increasing population, and substantial levels of development, providing a western link is expected to reduce traffic congestion in the west of the City. This should provide additional opportunities to re-allocate road space to support more sustainable forms of transport thus ensuring improvements in the overall environment of the City, and accessibility by all.
6. It is imperative that the suggested benefits of providing a western link are 'locked in' so that the City continues to benefit from the anticipated improvements in congestion, the living environment and the economy

Progress to date

7. In 2009, the county council consulted on plans for a package of measures designed to deliver the aims of the TfN strategy, then known as the NATS implementation plan. This consultation made it clear that the NDR was intended to provide an alternative route for traffic to and from the north of Norwich, widening the scope for major public transport and other improvements and enabling the promotion of more sustainable forms of transport. This approach is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) which promotes sustainable transport modes to support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, reduce congestion, and give people a real choice about how they travel.
8. Many of the elements of this original package have been delivered, with substantial improvements in the City Centre which are ongoing as well as bus priority measures in the wider urban area, with the development of measures on both Dereham Road and Newmarket Road, the creation of a two way route on Chapelfield North and the removal of general traffic from St Stephens Street.
9. The first three of seven strategic cycle routes have been delivered with the award to the city council of a significant level of funding through the cycle ambition grant. This has completed the first significant route through the city (the Pink Pedalway) and the Yellow and Blue routes are under construction. The aspiration is to continue the high level of investment to progress one route every two years.
10. These measures have already achieved a significant increase in the use of sustainable transport modes

Future Infrastructure Investment

11. One of the major justifications for providing a western link is that it will have economic benefits for the Norwich area particularly in view of the developments that are expected in the west Norwich area, including the Food Enterprise Zone in Easton. However, a recent study by KPMG has demonstrated that the economic impact of new development in congested area such as Norwich are hugely greater if it is supported by improved public transport (60% higher in regional centres and 34% higher on the urban fringe). It is therefore clear that in order to accommodate increased investment and people providing a much enhanced public transport system across the urban area is critical to maximising the economic benefits, and must form part of a package of measures that continues to build on the work that

has already been done. The programme of works proposed in 2009 and delivered as the Transport for Norwich Strategy is currently undergoing a review. Until that review is complete and a new implementation plan agreed it would be premature to specify exactly which schemes should be complementary to completing the western link. However there are themes that need addressing and these include

- i) Significant improvements to core bus routes;
- ii) The continued delivery of the cycle network, both the strategic and the more local routes
- iii) Improvements for pedestrians, as identified in the emerging local cycling and walking investment plan.
- iv) further measures in the city centre to improve the public realm, enhance facilities for public transport, walking and cycling and reducing through traffic
- v) Improvements to the inner ring road junctions
- vi) Soft measures such as travel planning, public transport information.
- vii) Measures to exploit the new and emerging technologies in the movement of people such as electric charging points and autonomous vehicles
- viii) The maintenance of existing transport infrastructure to ensure that the facilities provided continue to provide the full benefits anticipated

12. The County Council in association with the city, Broadland and South Norfolk district councils have recently submitted a bid for the 'Transforming Cities' fund which strongly recognises these needs and, if successful, could result in a very substantial improvement to public transport across the City with links to the west of the City being a core component.

Maintenance implications

13. Capital infrastructure improvements such as the Western Link are important for the economic sustainability of the area but it is also important to maintain existing and improved infrastructure to ensure that it continues to deliver the necessary benefits. However the present routine highway maintenance budget for Norwich is the same as it was in 2010/11 with no allowance for inflation. For footways the situation is even bleaker; the annual allocation for refurbishing footways in Norwich has fallen from a peak of £1.4M to £350k in this financial year. The budget for slurry sealing the asphalt footways has been reduced from £100k last year to £30k this. The level of financial restrictions experienced means the environment for all highway users - motorists, pedestrians and cyclists alike cannot be kept to an acceptable standard and this is undermining overall policy objectives to encourage sustainable transport modes

14. It is therefore essential that the condition of the existing transport infrastructure is maintained in order to keep it in an acceptable condition for all road users

and that any new infrastructure provided, be it a major new road or a cycle route, can be adequately maintained going forward. It is suggested that consideration be given to adopting a system that takes account of vehicle, cycle and pedestrian numbers using a section of highway to ensure that funding is allocated where it is most needed.

The river Wensum strategy

15. The route of the Western Link will cross the River Wensum upstream of Norwich and may have environmental impacts on the river downstream within the city. A partnership led by Norwich City Council - the River Wensum Strategy Partnership - has recently completed the River Wensum Strategy which was adopted by Norwich City Council in June 2018. Partners include the Broads Authority, Norfolk County Council, and the Environment Agency. The strategy aims to revitalise the river by improving its environment, improve sustainable access to the river including greater connectivity with the Norfolk Trails network, and encouraging greater activity on the river itself. The strategy proposals should act as an economic driver to attract external funding and contribute to Norwich's regeneration, as well as encouraging sustainable means of transport.
16. Although the river corridor covered by the strategy falls within the city council and a small part of Broadland and South Norfolk's areas (within the Broads Authority area of responsibility for planning purposes), the document acknowledges that the strategy area does not exist in isolation and that development outside its boundary, such as the proposed Western Link, may have implications and opportunities for the regeneration of the river corridor. It states at paragraph 6.45 that if this major development progresses, its environmental impacts on the River Wensum should be fully addressed and mitigated. Therefore an assessment of the environmental impact of the provision of the western link on the River Wensum in Norwich is required (specifically for the river corridor defined in the River Wensum Strategy), along with a package of mitigation measures, as appropriate, to be delivered as the scheme progresses.

This council's position

17. The council has always supported the provision of road infrastructure to the north of the city on the basis that the benefits achieved will be 'locked in' through the implementation of measures within the City to promote sustainable transport, and maintain the benefits of the reduced traffic levels. A motion to council was carried in November 2008. In November 2009 the council's Executive determined to support the NDR as part of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy Implementation Plan (NATSIP) and in 2012 Cabinet endorsed that approach supporting the construction of the current sections of the road.
18. The Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (adopted 2011, with amendments adopted 2014) supports implementation of NATS, including the NDR, in Policy 6 (Access and Transportation). The Regulation 18 draft of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) notes that this policy will need updating in the emerging plan to reflect recent progress on the NDR and to

recognise that the county council has identified the Norwich Western Link as one of its infrastructure priorities.

19. The implementation of the NDR and the associated measures are critical to the delivery of the Joint Core Strategy, which runs until 2026. It must therefore be expected that, at the very least, all the measures identified in the current NATSIP have been delivered before then
20. The western link should, therefore, continue to be supported, subject to the implementation of the complementary TFN measures and it is recommended that, in response to the current consultation, the council confirms its continued support for on the condition that the county council commits to the continued delivery of the Transport for Norwich programme

Integrated impact assessment



NORWICH
City Council

The IIA should assess **the impact of the recommendation** being made by the report

Detailed guidance to help with the completion of the assessment can be found [here](#). Delete this row after completion

Report author to complete

Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	11 July 2018
Director / Head of service	Head of city development services and head of planning
Report subject:	Response to the Norfolk County Council consultation on the Norwich Western Link
Date assessed:	29 June 2018

	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposal will generate construction jobs in the wider Norwich area, future investment in the area and create opportunities for growth and jobs, particularly, in the NE side of the city. Coupled to delivery of other NATS measures the proposal will also create opportunities for growth and jobs elsewhere in Greater Norwich, including the city centre
Financial inclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Health and well being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential to reduce traffic flows and associated pollution problems on parts of the city's radial routes and ring road if coupled with other transportation projects in the city
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Relations between groups (cohesion)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Eliminating discrimination & harassment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advancing equality of opportunity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential to reduce traffic flows and improve highway safety on parts of the city's radial routes and ring road if coupled with other transportation projects in the city
Natural and built environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No significant impact in the city (However there may be an impact in Broadland and South Norfolk; this has not been assessed)
Waste minimisation & resource use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential to reduce traffic flows and improve highway safety on parts of the city's radial routes and ring road if coupled with other transportation projects in the city

Sustainable procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Energy and climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Risk management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recommendations from impact assessment				
Positive				
<p>As the site is entirely within Broadland District and South Norfolk district council administrative areas, this analysis relates to the impacts on Norwich only. Overall there are positive features in terms of employment opportunities for construction and as part of the wider growth of the Norwich area. The positive impacts on the environment, traffic and pollution and health are dependent on a programme of improvements to transport on foot, by cycle and public transport, as opportunities for removing traffic capacity on key parts of radial routes and the ring road northwest of the city are delivered. It is essential that these take place concurrently with the development.</p>				
Negative				
Neutral				
Issues				

