

Norwich Western Link Project Update – 25 June 2021

Dear Jordana Wheeler

I'm really pleased to tell you that we have today awarded the contract to design and build the Norwich Western Link to Ferrovial Construction.

Ferrovial Construction are a leading construction and engineering company who have a great deal of experience in delivering highways projects in the UK and around the world. We have appointed them following a competitive procurement process which began in summer 2020, in which they emerged as the highest scoring bidder, and a unanimous decision by the county council's cabinet earlier this month to award the contract..

Their team will start work immediately alongside our existing project team to further develop the design of the Norwich Western Link and we're really looking forward to working with them to deliver such an important project for Norfolk. If you want to find out more about our newly appointed contractor, you can visit their website at [www.ferrovial.com](http://www.ferrovial.com).

In other good news, we have also submitted the outline business case for the Norwich Western Link to the Department for Transport today. You will hopefully remember from my recent updates that we have a really strong case - we can demonstrate that the project would provide high value for money, significantly reduce many journey times to the west of Norwich, improve road safety and reduce carbon emissions from vehicles. If the outline business case is approved, this would provide a funding commitment from government which is expected to cover 85% of the £198 million total project costs.

These are two significant milestones on this project that bring us closer to making the Norwich Western Link a reality. I'm aware that some of you may have had journeys delayed by roadworks in and around Norwich recently - I hope you understand that roadworks are a necessity but I also know how frustrating they can be, I've been caught up in them myself so I can sympathise. But it also made me think that with the Norwich Western Link in place, traffic on the A47 southern bypass and ring roads would have an alternative route to take.

We need this kind of resilience in our transport networks, not only for when there are issues like roadworks or traffic collisions but also to cope with anticipated population and job growth. It's important that we invest in measures to support all kinds of journeys, whether they are on foot, by bike, by public transport or by another vehicle, such as cars, lorries or ambulances. The Norwich Western Link is a vital part of this that will help give Norfolk the transport infrastructure it needs.

We're turning our attention now to preparations for the pre-planning application public consultation which is due to take place in the autumn. We'll update you about this prior to the launch.

In the meantime, you can find out more about the Norwich Western Link on our website at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/nwl](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/nwl).

## Norwich Western Link Project Update – 27 May 2021

Following county council elections earlier this month, I'm really pleased to be returning as Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure. Making improvements to our transport infrastructure for all types of journeys and road users, and securing investment for those improvements, is an absolute priority for me and this council.

We see the Norwich Western Link as an essential part of these infrastructure improvements. Traffic has already very nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels and there is a pressing need for this new link between the A47 and Broadland Northway west of the city to tackle existing congestion problems and futureproof our road network against planned growth, and to support our local economy and businesses to bounce back from the effects of the pandemic.

As mentioned in our last update to you, we're planning to discuss some key decisions on the project at a meeting of our cabinet in early June. This includes getting agreement to appoint the contractor to take responsibility for the design and construction of the project and also to agree to submitting the Outline Business Case to the Department for Transport. If this case is approved, it is expected that the government would commit funding to cover 85 per cent of the cost of the project, bringing tens of millions of pounds of national investment into the county.

We have a really strong case to submit to the government, including being able to demonstrate that the project is in the highest category in terms of providing value for money. This is in part because it will create hundreds of millions of pounds of economic benefits over the 60-year appraisal period (starting in 2025 when it's due to be completed), including £315 million worth of travel time benefits. This figure includes efficiencies and cost savings for businesses, people commuting to work and people travelling for all other purposes, as well as reduced vehicle operating costs.

Linked to this, and using information from our updated traffic model, the Norwich Western Link will significantly reduce many journey times to the west of Norwich, with some more than halving. Road safety would improve too, with 515 fewer accidents involving a motor vehicle over 60 years, an average of nine fewer accidents a year. And it will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions from vehicles over the 60-year appraisal period, which supports local and national carbon reduction targets.

The procurement process for the project's main contractor and subsequent costing exercise now puts the cost of the project at £198 million, an increase of £45 million since the previous estimate calculated in early 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic. Uncertainty created by the pandemic is part of the reason for the increase, with other key contributing factors being more investment in environmental mitigation and improvement measures, and market forces, in part due to there currently being significant demand in the construction sector.

Despite this increase, and as mentioned above, the Norwich Western Link remains a high value for money project according to the Department for Transport's criteria, with a 'benefit to cost' ratio of 3.4 (meaning that it would realise 3.4 pounds of benefits for every pound spent on it). With the majority of funding for the project due to come from the government, the local contribution required to deliver the project has increased by £6.9 million.

There is a great deal of information about the project included in the cabinet report, which you can read [here](#) on the council's website (full link at the end of this email too). The report

will be considered by cabinet on Monday 7 June and, subject to approval by cabinet members, a report asking county councillors to endorse the contract award and continued expenditure on the project will then be considered by the full council on the same day. A link to the full council report is also provided at the end of this email. We'll email you again following these meetings to make you aware of the outcome.