

## Norwich Western Link Project Update – January 2021

At the start of a new year I wanted to get in touch to update you on the Norwich Western Link, a Norfolk County Council infrastructure priority project to create a new 3.8 mile dual carriageway road connecting the western end of Broadland Northway to the A47 trunk road.

Last year was a very significant one for the project with some major milestones accomplished. In May 2020, the Norwich Western Link was given conditional entry into the Department for Transport's Large Local Majors funding programme and as a result we received more than £1 million to continue developing the project. We also began the process of selecting a contractor who will take on responsibility for the design and build of the road, and currently have a shortlist of three bidders who are developing their submissions for us to evaluate.

We conducted our third public consultation, our Local Access Consultation, on the project between July and September last year, asking for people's views on our proposals for the local roads which the Norwich Western Link will cross and to consider additional measures that support walking, cycling and public transport use. Alongside this, we continued to carry out extensive surveys in the area around the proposed route throughout last year and started work on our environmental mitigation and enhancement proposals, including green bridges and habitat creation.

This year promises to be just as busy on the project. We're currently compiling an outline business case which we plan to submit to the Department for Transport in the spring. If approved, this would unlock national funding for up to 85% of the total cost of the project. We also expect to be able to announce the design and build contractor for the project in the spring, and we intend to take a report to the county council's cabinet meeting in March to seek approval to submit the outline business case and appoint the contractor. Once the contractor is in place, they will work alongside the existing project team to further develop the design for the road and associated measures, including for the viaduct across the River Wensum.

Work is continuing on the complementary measures that will add to the benefits the Norwich Western Link will create for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users in the area to the west of Norwich; we're using the information gathered from the Local Access Consultation to help shape these. There will be a further opportunity for people to give us their comments on elements of the project in a public consultation that's due to be held in mid-2021 ahead of the planning application being finalised and submitted in late 2021. And throughout this year we'll be progressing our proposals to protect and support wildlife and the environment through the project, which is likely to include creating and enhancing significant areas of woodland and wetland in the local area.

All this work is getting us closer to our goal of starting work on site to construct the Norwich Western Link in late 2023 and open the road for use in late 2025. Not only will this reduce traffic congestion and associated problems and improve journey times between the A47 and Broadland Northway to the west of Norwich, but it will also support our local businesses and help to ensure Norfolk's transport networks can cope with planned population and job growth for years to come.

We appreciate all the input and support we've had on the project to date which has helped us get this far. We'll continue to update you as the project progresses and if you want to find out more in the meantime, please have a look at the Norwich Western Link pages of our website at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/nwl](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/nwl)