

Norwich Western Link project update

You may have seen articles in the Eastern Daily Press newspaper this week which may have raised some questions for you about our Norwich Western Link project, to connect Broadland Northway to the A47 west of Norwich, and I'm getting in touch to provide some further information as a result.

Work on the project is continuing and the project team are focused on getting our proposals developed to the point where we can ask for your feedback on them in our pre-planning application public consultation. This then will help us get our proposals finalised before we submit the planning application.

You may be aware that this consultation has been delayed compared to our original timetable. This is because we are taking more time to consider the findings of our 2021 ecology surveys, and this work will feed into the proposals we show in the consultation. I realise any delay is frustrating but it's important we take the time needed to get this right. This work is still ongoing but I should be in a position to give you a further update in the near future, so I'll be in touch again soon.

In terms of Thursday's EDP story in particular, this was prompted by a Norwich City Council report that is due to be considered by their cabinet next week. Nearly a year ago the city council stated that their support for the Norwich Western Link would be dependent upon certain conditions being met. Some of these conditions, notably those around environmental mitigation, form part of the work we are currently working on in preparation for the upcoming consultation and planning application. Others are linked to the wider Transport for Norwich Strategy which was updated and agreed by the county council towards the end of last year. There's still a lot of work ahead to deliver the aims within this strategy including creating an action plan, which is the next step, and the city council will continue to work with us in developing this.

It's important to mention that I and my cabinet colleagues fully appreciate the positive difference the Norwich Western Link will make to so many people in Norfolk. Removing traffic congestion from small unsuitable roads and reducing journey times are the direct benefits but there are many more benefits too. These include helping ambulances and other blue light services reach people more quickly in emergency situations, helping to improve road safety and air quality close to people's homes by taking traffic out of residential areas, supporting our businesses by making journeys more efficient, reducing transport costs and making it easier for customers to reach them, and enabling people living in areas currently blighted by traffic to walk and cycle and generally have a better quality of life. The Norwich Western Link, along with all of the other sustainable transport measures continuing to be introduced across the city, will provide the necessary infrastructure we need to accommodate growth and ensure the balance of transport systems, environment and economy for Norfolk and Norwich is fit for the future.