

**Ref: FUL/2024/0022. Norwich Western Link planning application**

To Whom it may concern,

The Norwich Western Link is a 3.8-mile dual carriageway to connect the Broadland Northway from the A1067 Fakenham Road to the A47 west of Norwich.

The Norwich Western Link (NWL) is one of a number of critical transport infrastructure projects in Norfolk that Norfolk County Council is working with partners to deliver. The project is identified as such in Better Together for Norfolk. Norfolk County Council Strategy 2021-2025, the Corporate Delivery Plan 2023-2024 and the Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Norfolk County Council. It is also included in the Local Transport Plan 4 Strategy 2021-2036 (LTP4) and the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP).

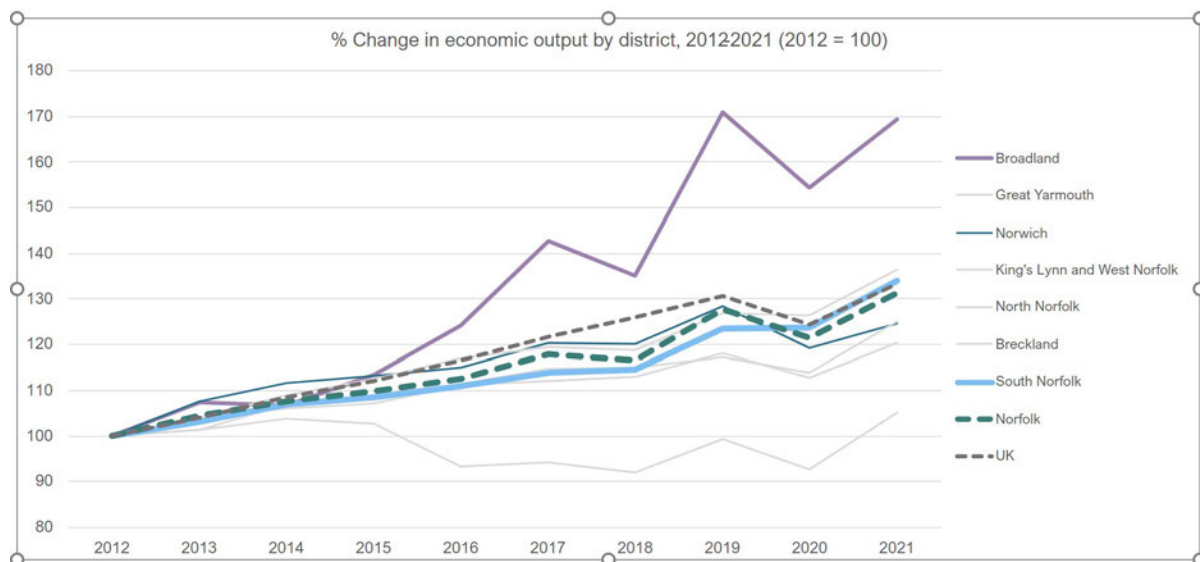
The NWL will provide the missing 5.0km dual carriageway link between the western end of A1270 Broadland Northway from its junction with the A1067 Fakenham Road at its northern end, to the A47 trunk road near Honingham at its southern end. It will also complement the proposed dualling of the A47. As dualling the A47 would make that road more appealing to road users and draw traffic away from minor roads, having the NWL as an alternative route is essential to alleviating potential traffic levels at the eastern end of the A47 (Local Impact Report, page 9). Therefore, without the NWL, there will be increased levels of traffic on roads such as Sandy Lane, Wood Lane and Taverham Road (Local Impact Report, page 10). Moreover, the new dualled road would provide a connection to the NWL via the Wood Lane junction (Local Impact Report, page 4).

The project will help to significantly relieve traffic congestion on local roads and reduce journey times, including to areas of employment. Moreover, it will help to facilitate orbital movement around Norwich and thereby enhance the highway network in the region. It will also significantly shorten response times for many ambulances travelling to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital from a range of locations across Norfolk and Suffolk. This is of particular importance given the long distances to alternative A&E hospital sites in areas such as King's Lynn, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft (Planning Statement, 57).

The NWL will play a key part in unlocking growth in Norfolk, through improved access to commercial sites, wider regional connection and reduced journey times. A good example of how improvements to road infrastructure can generate economic growth, is the nearby Broadland Northway. Construction of the A1270 Broadland Northway (Norwich NDR) started in January 2016 and the road was fully opened to traffic in April 2018. The route runs 19.5km (12 miles) around the north of Norwich, from the A47 junction at Postwick in the east, to the A1067 Fakenham Road in the west. When reviewing GVA in the Broadland area, from ONS data, there is a clear

increase in GVA from 2018 to 2022. This can be attributed partly to the Broadland Northway road which has opened access to key commercial sites and enabled growth in Norfolk’s economy, including financial and professional services.

The NWL itself will provide further economic benefits for Broadland which, as outlined in the below graph, is the fastest growing district in Norfolk. Broadland is home to economically significant sectors such as financial services, advanced engineering and manufacturing, aviation and visitor economy. By enhancing the connectivity of the western end of the Broadland Northway to the A47, this will address current transport problems to the west of Norwich and facilitate predicted volumes of traffic. Therefore, by reducing potential congestion, there will be faster and more reliable access to the Broadland Business Park, visitor economy attractions (which will help attract greater visitor numbers to locations such as the Dinosaur Park in Lenwade) and amenities related to other key sectors. This greater access and connectivity to businesses will help to stimulate economic activity which will facilitate further growth for the district.



Benefits will not just be realised in the greater Norwich area but will be felt across Norfolk and the region. Increased capacity in the highway network will reduce journey times (and, concomitantly, travel costs) and help to open new markets and increase productivity. An illustration of the opportunity to the wider Norfolk economy, is the anticipated benefit to the North Norfolk coastal visitor economy (*Planning Statement, 59 – 60*). Trips to the North Norfolk coast often originate to the south and west of Norwich and the NWL will help facilitate access to destinations to the north of Norwich. This improved access to the North Norfolk coast has the potential to increase visitor numbers and thereby stimulate economic activity and growth.

Therefore, investing in infrastructure improvements, such as the NWL, will be a vital part of supporting Norfolk’s economy, with the provision of good transport links critical to many of our major industries such as tourism, financial services, agriculture

and manufacturing and engineering. The NWL will create stronger and more effective links to the Midlands and the North and will help Norfolk businesses to thrive and deliver greater economic growth and jobs. The highway will further help to improve journeys into and around the west of the city and support potential housing and jobs growth. It will provide the infrastructure to manage the additional traffic this growth will create and improve quality of life for people living in the area.

The construction process itself will also result in a modest increase in economic activity (*Planning Statement, 60*). This will be realised through local businesses – including construction firms, material suppliers and service providers – experiencing increased demand for their products and services to enable the construction of the NWL. This increased demand will inject capital into the local economy and has the potential to stimulate growth, job creation and apprenticeship numbers.

Norfolk is perfectly placed to be a major contributor to the UK economy. The NWL will contribute to this and supports Norfolk’s emerging Local Growth Plan: Economic Strategy 2024-2029, to achieve economic growth. The strategy showcases our strengths in clean energy, agri-food, financial services and ICT digital and how the county has the potential to play a leading role in the industries of the future. While emphasising the importance of public transport as well as cycling and walking routes, our strategy also outlines the crucial role that road infrastructure will play in facilitating economic growth. A number of actions within the strategy are intended to bring about improvements to Norfolk’s road network. One action notes the importance of further improvements to the A10, A134, A140 and A146 and an extension of the A1270 to meet the A47 via the Norwich Western Link (*Economic Strategy, 84*).

As part of the Norwich Western Link project, the council is committed to supporting people to walk, cycle and use public transport in the the county. By incorporating non-motorised user facilities alongside the highway, new public rights of way, improving existing routes and coordinating existing public rights of way, the construction of the NWL is anticipated to support a mix of road users (*Planning Statement, 52*). The NWL is also essential to the proposed non-motorised user route which is planned to run underneath the A47 (if dualled) and head west to connect with the non-motorised route running along the east side of the NWL (*Consultation Response, page 2*). A range of other complementary transport measures are also being developed with input from local parish councils, walking and cycling groups, bus companies and others.

Yours Sincerely,



**Head of Economic Development**

Norfolk County Council