

Norwich Western Link Update – February 2021

You may remember that the Norwich Western Link project team updated you last month on the great progress that has been made on this vital project for the county over the last year, and informed you of the work we would be carrying out over the next year and beyond to fill in the 'missing link' between Broadland Northway and the A47.

When we wrote to you last month, the team told you that a report on the project was due to be considered at a March meeting of our cabinet. Due to a delay in the completion of the procurement process to appoint a design and build contractor for the project, this report is now scheduled to be considered at the June meeting of cabinet instead, which is the first meeting following the local elections in May.

This means there will be a delay of about three months on the decision to submit the Outline Business Case and appoint the contractor. In the meantime, work on the project will continue as completing the Norwich Western Link and the benefits this will create for local communities, businesses and the county's economy is a key priority for the council. We'll write to you again when the report is published ahead of the June meeting.

Since the project team's last update, we have progressed our work to build on the benefits the Norwich Western Link will create for local communities and support people to walk, cycle and use public transport as part of the project. We consulted on a number of proposals designed to support this ambition last year through our Local Access Consultation and had nearly 440 responses, thank you to everyone who gave us their views.

Having taken the responses into account, we are now taking forward proposals to improve Public Rights of Way in the vicinity of the Norwich Western Link route, so that people have good opportunities for walking and cycling on dedicated local routes as a result of the project.

We have also shortlisted five measures to support walking and cycling across a wider area, including two new pedestrian and cycle crossings on the A1067 and three 'cycle friendly' on-road links, which will be designed to make people living in communities to the west of Norwich feel safer to cycle to facilities and employment and educational sites over relatively short distances.

As part of these proposals, and to support our environmental commitments on the project, we are also planning to create an additional green bridge across the Norwich Western Link. This will allow walkers, cyclists and horse riders to cross the road and link in with our other walking and cycling proposals and the wider Public Rights of Way network. It will also form a wildlife crossing for species, to complement the other two green bridges and two wildlife underpasses already planned.

More details on the outcome of the Local Access Consultation and the proposals we are taking forwards now, including proposals on the local roads that are crossed by the Norwich Western Link and maps showing the routes and locations of the proposed measures, can be found on our website at www.norfolk.gov.uk/nwl.

We'll continue to work hard to get the Norwich Western Link delivered as soon as possible and, as ever, we'll keep you updated on our progress.