

Norwich Western Link project update

Following my email to you on 27 May, I'm pleased to confirm that Norfolk County Council's Cabinet and Full Council met today and approved the recommendations they were asked to consider in relation to our Norwich Western Link project.

This means we have endorsement to, amongst other things, appoint the contractor for the project and submit the outline business case (OBC) to the Department for Transport. These are two major milestones for the project and the next stages will include a pre-planning consultation later in 2021 and the submission of the planning application early in 2022. This will move the project further forwards towards our target of the new road being open for use in 2025. It's really fantastic that we're making such good progress on this important project for Norfolk.

I realise I mentioned this in my last update but it bears repeating - we expect the Norwich Western Link to bring £168 million of national funding into Norfolk. This will cover the majority of the costs of the project and enable us to provide not just a 3.8 mile road to complete a dual carriageway orbital route around Norwich but also investment in measures to support walking, cycling and public transport use on the local road network and the creation and improvement of habitats for wildlife across a wide area to the west of the city.

So what happens next? We will need to await the potential for a Scrutiny Committee review of the Cabinet decision. Subject to the outcome of that meeting, we would then finalise arrangements to appoint the contractor and submit the OBC, hopefully by the end of the month.

Once the contractor is on board we'll be able to let you know more about them, including who they are. They'll start working with the existing project team to further develop the design of the Norwich Western Link; a lot of this design work was carried out throughout the procurement process which started nearly a year ago, so they already have a very sound understanding of the project and will be able to start work immediately.

This work will then feed into our pre-planning application public consultation which is scheduled for the autumn and in which we'll be able to provide you with more details on the project, including the viaduct across the River Wensum. Following the consultation, we anticipate being able to submit the planning application for the project in early 2022.

Alongside this, the submission of the OBC is significant because if it is approved, this will give us a funding commitment from government and we would expect this to cover 85% of the total project costs. The government have already shown confidence in the project by approving our strategic outline business case last year, and the Norwich Western Link has been identified as a regional infrastructure priority by Transport East, the Sub-national Transport Body, so we are in a really good position to gain this investment for Norfolk.

As ever, I want to extend my thanks to all those people, groups and organisations who have helped us get to this point, and there are many of you. We've got more

work ahead of us before we can get on site to start construction, hopefully in 2023, but today's news brings us a big step closer to making that a reality.

Best wishes,

Martin

Cllr Martin Wilby

Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure

Norfolk County Council

Link to cabinet report:

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1791/Committee/169/Default.aspx>

Link to full council report:

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1885/Committee/2/Default.aspx>