

**Consultation Documents Update and Proposed Responses
Northern Distributor Road**
Report by Head of Development Management

Summary: This report informs the Committee of the consultation on the Northern Distributor Road (NDR), and invites the Committee's comments on the proposed responses.

Recommendation: That the report be noted and the nature of proposed responses be endorsed.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Broads Authority has been consulted on the proposed Northern Distributor Road (NDR) by Norfolk County Council.

2 The Proposed Northern Distributor Road

- 2.1 The proposed NDR comprises a 20.4 km length of primarily dual carriageway road around north Norwich, linking the A1067 Fakenham Road near Attlebridge to the A47 Trunk Road at Postwick. It includes roundabout junctions with the main radial routes running into and out of Norwich and would provide a grade-separated interchange with the A140 Cromer Road and the A47 at Postwick. It would have sections both in cuttings and raised on embankments. Earthwork bunds and screening are proposed adjacent to certain sections.
- 2.2 New routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders are part of the proposal, including new bridleways adjacent to the NDR and via the six new bridges over the NDR. The NDR would result in the closure of a number of existing roads.
- 2.3 The NDR is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and will be the subject of an application to the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order in due course. This will include provisions relating to development consent, compulsory acquisition of land, road closures, new roads and other highway related matters.

- 2.4 The NSIP process is highly regulated and requires extensive pre-application consultation with statutory bodies, stakeholders and interested parties. This consultation is part of that process and there will be opportunity to comment at later stages of the process.
- 2.5 The consultation is accompanied by a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).
- 2.6 The consultation advises that the NDR has the potential to bring £1.3bn of economic benefit to Norfolk and around 37,000 new homes to the Greater Norwich area. In particular it will support growth in the north-east quadrant, including an urban extension either side of the NDR supporting 7 – 10,000 dwellings and 25ha of new employment land at Rackheath.
- 2.7 The Government has allocated £86.5m funding for the NDR.

3 Implications for the Broads

- 3.1 The proposed route of the NDR does not come within the Broads Authority's Executive Area. The section from the junction with the A1151 Wroxham Road (just south of Green Lane West at Rackheath) to the Postwick hub runs midway between the valleys of the Bure and the Yare, but does not pass through any Broads parishes. At the junction with the A1151 Wroxham Road the NDR would be 2km directly south of the Broads boundary, whilst at the Postwick junction it would be approximately 300m north of the boundary.
- 3.2 The construction of the NDR is unlikely to have any direct impact on the Broads as it does not pass through the Broads and nor is it adjacent, other than where there are existing major roads. It would, however, improve access to Norwich and the wider highway network for Broads residents and may improve journey times for public transport.
- 3.3 The construction of the NDR is likely, however, to have indirect effects. These are likely to be as follows:
 - Improved access to the Broads, which will increase visitor numbers and visitor pressures, including on sites and on resources, particularly the use of the water and at honeypot sites.
 - Impacts resulting from the major development enabled by the NDR, particularly the housing and employment growth in the north-east growth triangle. This will include increased visitor numbers and pressures on resources, particularly the abstraction of water.

- Impact on species due to the disruption and severance of habitats. This is identified as an issue in the PEIR and bats are identified as particularly vulnerable.

4 Proposed Comments

- 4.1 This is a proposal which will have significant impact on the communities to the north of Norwich and has the potential for a significant indirect impact on the Broads.
- 4.2 These indirect impacts relate to the effects of improved access, the new development enabled by the NDR and the impact on habitats and species.
- 4.3 In order to mitigate these it is recommended that the landscaping and green infrastructure component be strengthened and that enhanced biodiversity measures are incorporated. It is also recommended that the developer consider bio-diversity off-setting.
- 4.4 It is also strongly recommended that the Broads Authority be involved in the development of mitigation strategies and the development of offsetting.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

Background papers: None

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Appendices: None