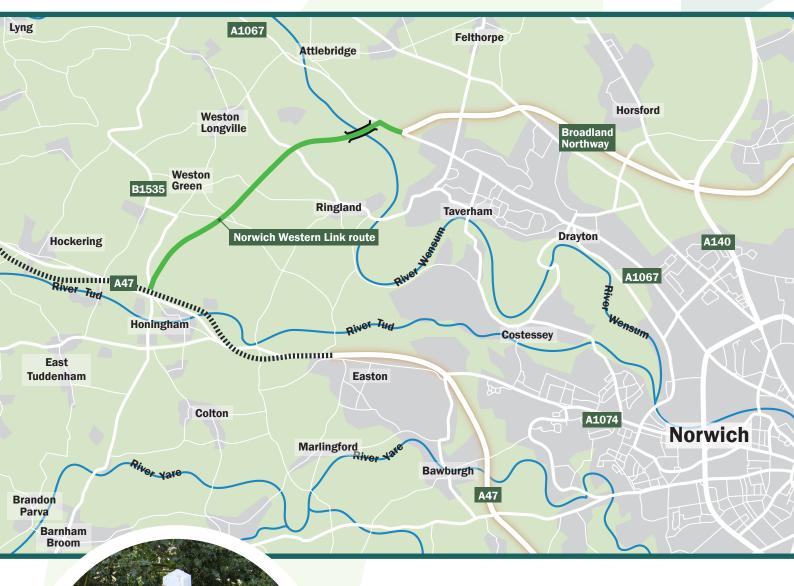


Local Access Consultation



Monday 27 July to Sunday 20 September 2020

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Introduction

With significant job and population growth anticipated in the Greater Norwich area, it's vital we have the transport infrastructure in place so communities can grow successfully and people and goods can get where they need to go safely and efficiently.

Creating a Norwich Western Link to connect the western end of Broadland Northway (formerly the Northern Distributor Road) to the A47 is one of Norfolk County Council's top infrastructure priorities. Since before Broadland Northway fully opened in spring 2018, there have been calls to fill in what many people saw as the 'missing link' between where the new dual carriageway road ends at the A1067 Fakenham Road and the A47.

Together with the A47 dualling between North Tuddenham and Easton, due to start construction during 2022, the 3.8 mile Norwich Western Link would complete a dual carriageway orbital route around Norwich. This would reduce the need for traffic to enter the city and alleviate local transport issues to the west of Norwich.

Project objectives

There are many things we need to consider as we continue to work on our plans for the Norwich Western Link, including what we want it to achieve. We have therefore developed a set of objectives to guide our work. These are aligned with national and local policy and have taken account of the priorities of local residents.



Support sustainable economic growth



Improve the quality of life for local communities



Promote an improved environment



Improve strategic connectivity with the national road network



Improve connectivity and journey times on key routes in Greater Norwich



Reduce the impacts of traffic on people and places within the western area of Greater Norwich



Improve safety on and near the road network, especially for pedestrians and cyclists



Encourage and support walking, cycling and public transport use



Protect the natural and built environment, including the integrity of the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation



Improve accessibility to key sites in Greater Norwich

Work to date

Our first Norwich Western Link consultation in summer 2018 showed there was strong support for creating a new road link between the A47 and Broadland Northway west of Norwich.

Following this, we assessed more than 80 options that could address the transport problems that exist in the area to the west of Norwich and reduced these down to a shortlist of four road options. We held a further public consultation on these options from November 2018 to January 2019 and considered the responses alongside other crucial information – such as transport benefits, environmental data and effects, value for money and impacts on local communities – to agree a preferred route in July 2019.

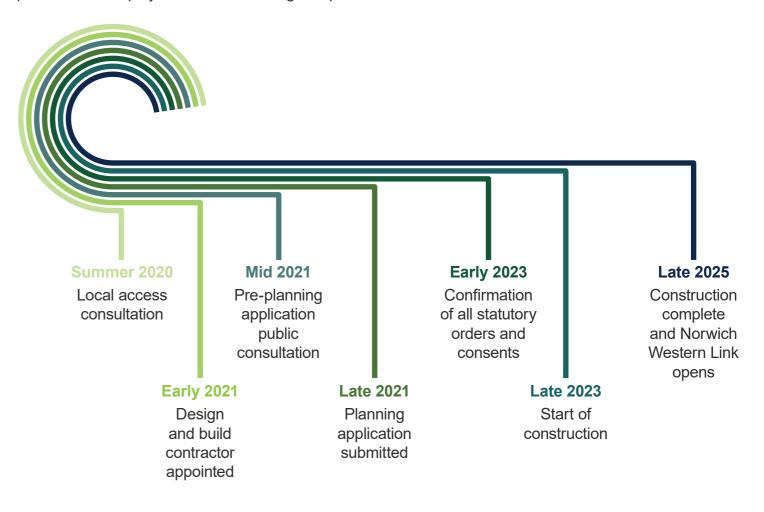
Since last July, we've been doing a lot of work to develop the design of the route and progress the project, including:

- » Further surveys to continue building on our knowledge and provide up-to-date information to be taken into account in our decision-making on the project
- » Refining the alignment of the route to respond to further information gathered such as environmental constraints and to link in to the new A47 junction planned as part of the North Tuddenham to Easton dualling scheme being delivered by Highways England
- » Initial work on developing environmental mitigation and enhancement measures.

In May 2020 the Department for Transport (DfT) approved our initial business case, which provided more than £1 million of development funding and means the Norwich Western Link has been given conditional entry into DfT's 'Large Local Majors' project funding programme.

Project timeline

We are working to the following timetable, some of which is subject to all the necessary statutory processes for a project of this kind being completed.



Why are we consulting?

We began the process to find a contractor for the Norwich Western Link in June 2020 by advertising the opportunity. Once appointed, the contractor will be responsible for the design of the road and its construction.

Following the preferred route announcement and subsequent work to develop the project, we are now in a position to share some of our proposals and get people's feedback. We want to do this now so that this feedback can be taken into account and inform our ongoing work and the bidding contractors during the procurement process. The contractors will be expected to progress their proposed design for the Norwich Western Link in the run-up to one of them being appointed.

What's in this consultation?

This consultation will focus on local access in the vicinity of the Norwich Western Link for vehicles, cyclists, walkers and other users.

We want to gauge views and receive people's thoughts on our proposals for the local roads that cross the route of the Norwich Western Link. The project has been developed to have no junctions with local roads between the A1067 Fakenham Road and A47 so that it would be effective at preventing rat-running, reducing journey times and improving journey reliability.

We do however need to decide what to do with the local roads that cross the route in light of the new link road and how this will change the way people travel. We also need to consider impacts on Public Rights of Way in the area and how we should support people to get where they want or need to go via various means of transport.

To complement this, we would like to gain feedback on early proposals to support walking, cycling and public transport use across a wider area to the west of Norwich. Over shorter distances and between residential areas and key destinations, we're keen to support people to choose an alternative to getting in their car where practical.

We will also take the opportunity to share some details of the initial design that has been developed since the preferred route was agreed in July 2019.

In arriving at these proposals, we have considered the needs of all users to make what we're suggesting as inclusive as possible. We have already had a lot of really useful input from a range of groups and representatives including parish councils, walking and cycling groups, bus companies and others with an interest in local access and Public Rights of Way.

We're looking forward to hearing what you think and every response will be considered. Thanks in advance for taking the time to give us your opinions and insight.



What will be in the next consultation?

We intend to submit the planning application for the Norwich Western Link in 2021. Before then, we will hold another public consultation to gain feedback on the details of the scheme that we plan to include in the planning application.

The pre-application consultation will provide more detail about the project and include elements such as:



The design of the viaduct over the River Wensum

The route of the Norwich Western Link includes a 670 metre-long viaduct which will be designed and constructed so as to not affect the integrity of the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation. Due to the specialist design and construction methods required, the contractor will be responsible for developing these details following their appointment.





The Norwich Western Link will reduce traffic congestion and rat-running on many local roads by creating a higher quality connection between the A47 and Broadland Northway. However all likely changes to how traffic will use the road network will need to be considered and we will also determine whether any traffic management measures are needed. We use traffic modelling to predict how traffic flows and movements are likely to alter as a result of the Norwich Western Link and other factors, such as dualling of the A47 and population growth. We're currently updating our traffic model to take account of new data and once complete, we'll use this to provide more details of the final design of the scheme and of any wider traffic mitigation measures.

Environmental mitigation



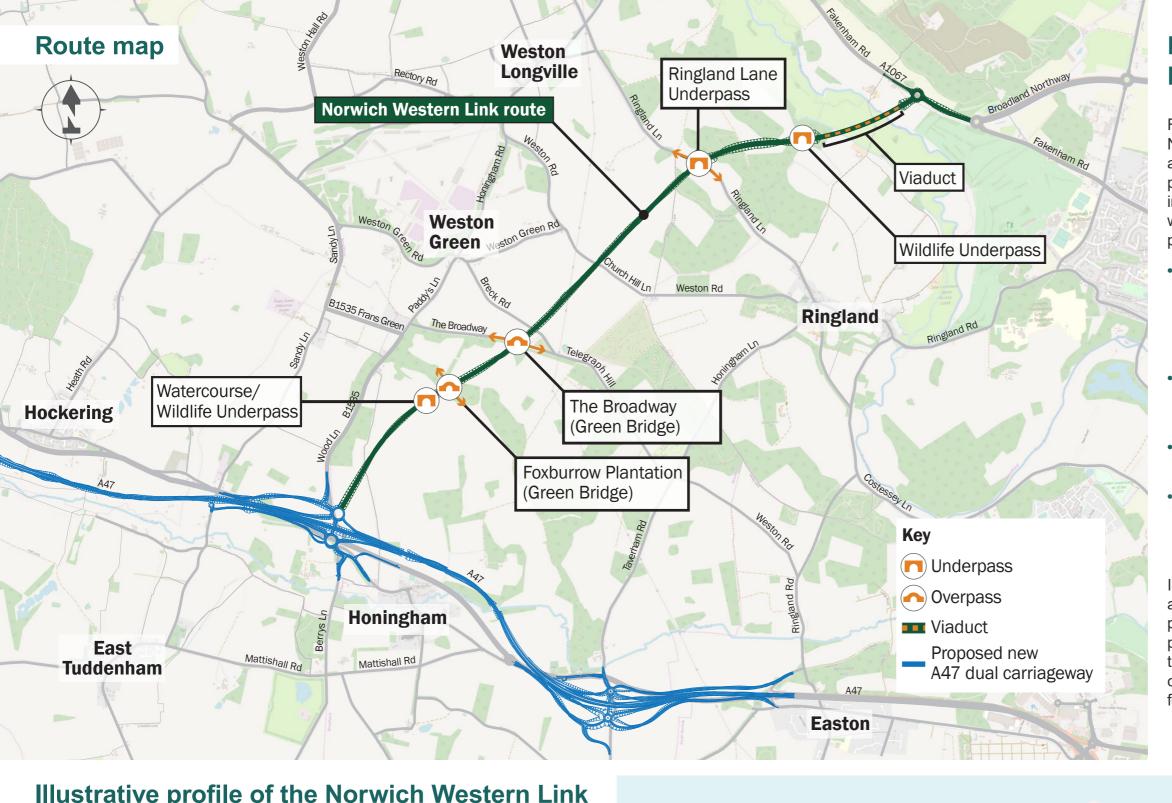
We are committed to building the Norwich Western Link in an environmentally-responsible way. Finding ways to limit the road's impact on wildlife, the landscape and local residents is a priority, and we will carry out an environmental impact assessment ahead of submitting the planning application which will inform what mitigation measures are needed and would be most effective. However current proposals for wildlife crossings along the Norwich Western Link are shown on the route map in these consultation materials.

Improvements to the A47

Highways England are planning to replace the existing single carriageway A47 between North Tuddenham and Easton with a dual carriageway, and have indicated construction will start in 2022. A statutory consultation on their proposals for this stretch of road, which included the proposed junction into which the Norwich Western Link would connect, was held in spring 2020. Details of this proposed junction, and the other junction Highways England are proposing at Taverham Road and Blind Lane, are shown on the route map in these consultation materials.

We've been in regular contact with Highways England since our work on the Norwich Western Link began and we will continue to share information and work together to ensure we're taking account of each other's plans and to minimise potential disruption to local residents and people travelling through the area once construction begins.

Highways England are also planning to improve the A47/A11 Thickthorn interchange and dual the A47 between Blofield and North Burlingham.



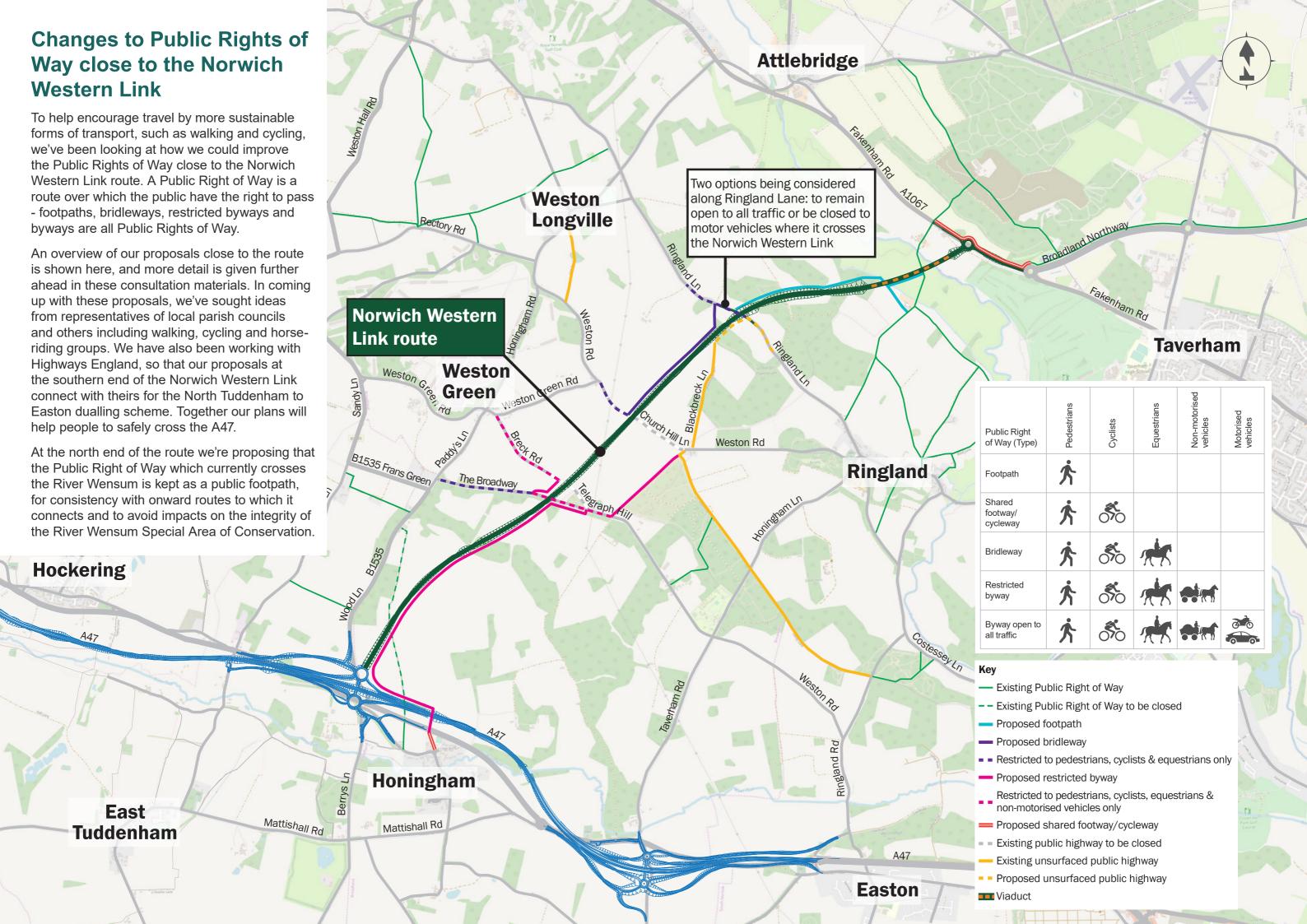
Local roads that cross the Norwich Western Link

Four existing roads cross the route of the proposed Norwich Western Link. Our proposals for these roads are summarised below and more details on our proposals for each road are provided further ahead in these consultation materials. Please note that where we are proposing to close any roads, access to property will be maintained.

- Ringland Lane two options: to keep the road open to all through traffic; or for it to be restricted to walkers, cyclists and horse riders only. Both options would see Ringland Lane cross under the Norwich Western Link.
- Weston Road (a section of which is also known as Church Hill Lane) to be entirely closed to through traffic.
- Breck Road (also known as Breck Lane) to be entirely closed to through traffic.
- The Broadway kept open as a through route to walkers, cyclists and horse riders only via a green bridge over the Norwich Western Link, which would also serve as a wildlife crossing.

In developing these proposals, we have considered a number of factors, including: feedback from local parish councils; current usage of these roads and potential impacts on journeys across the wider transport network; local topography, environmental considerations and mitigation requirements, and value for money.





Proposals for Ringland Lane and nearby Public Rights of Way

Ringland Lane is a rural road connecting the villages of Ringland and Weston Longville. We are proposing to keep Ringland Lane open, but we would like your views on whether it should be either:

- » Kept open to all traffic, including motor vehicles (as it currently is), with footways installed to improve pedestrian access and connectivity with the wider Public Rights of Way network, or
- » Restricted to walkers, cyclists and horse riders at the point where the road crosses the Norwich Western Link. This means Ringland Lane would become a no-through road to motorised traffic except for vehicle access to adjacent land and property.

Due to its location in a natural dip in the landscape, a bridge would be built over Ringland Lane to take the Norwich Western Link across. The bridge would provide clearance of at least 5.3 metres from Ringland Lane so that, for example, farm vehicles from adjacent land could still use the route.

If Ringland Lane is closed to motorised through traffic, a restriction would be imposed over a short section of the existing carriageway on each side of the Norwich Western Link to prevent motor vehicle access, with a barrier, such as bollards or gates, preventing access for vehicles. Vehicular traffic would be diverted to the A1067 Fakenham Road. Suitable turning points would be provided on each side of the restriction.



Artist's impression of Ringland Lane kept open to all traffic (looking north west).



Artist's impression of Ringland Lane closed to motor vehicles where it passes under the Norwich Western Link (looking north west).

Why are we proposing this?

Ringland Lane forms part of our proposals to help people walk and cycle in the local area, with enhanced links to nearby Public Rights of Way. The proposed underpass at Ringland Lane would also provide connectivity for wildlife to habitats either side of the Norwich Western Link.

Traffic flows on Ringland Lane measured in October 2019 were around 360 users per day, of which around 10% were pedestrians, cyclists or equestrians. It is the widest and most frequently used route crossing the Norwich Western Link, with better visibility for road users and as a C class road, it is maintained to a higher standard. If Weston Road, Breck Road and the Broadway are all closed to motorised through traffic, a small number of vehicles may divert to Ringland Lane if it were kept open to traffic. However, with the dualling of the A47 in place and the creation of the Norwich Western Link, we expect the amount of motorised traffic on Ringland Lane would reduce in comparison with 2019 levels.

What other options could we consider?

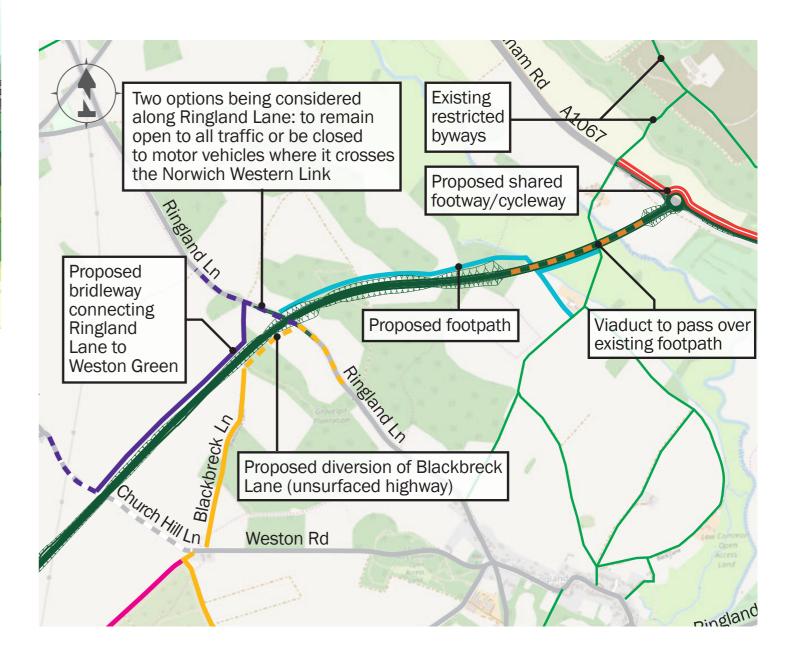
We could fully close Ringland Lane to all users. However, we are not proposing this as we want to maintain connectivity between the villages of Weston Longville and Ringland. Closing Ringland Lane entirely would also limit our ability to support walking and cycling in the local area. Due to the natural topography at Ringland Lane, it would not be feasible to reduce the height of the Norwich Western Link at this location even if Ringland Lane were closed to all users.

Nearby Public Rights of Way

In the vicinity of Ringland Lane, we are proposing the following changes to Public Rights of Way in order to improve connectivity:

- » A shared footway/cycleway is proposed to the north side of the section of Fakenham Road. This would connect existing Public Rights of Way with the cycleway at Broadland Northway.
- » A new public footpath is proposed alongside the Norwich Western Link to provide a link to other existing footpaths around Ringland and close to the River Wensum.
- » On the north west side of the Norwich Western Link, a new section of bridleway would be provided, linking to the hamlet of Weston Green.

An overview of the proposals for the Ringland Lane area is shown below.



Proposals for Weston Road (also known as Church Hill Lane) and nearby Public Rights of Way

In the centre of the route, Weston Road – a section of which is also known as Church Hill Lane – provides a connection between communities at Ringland and Weston Green.

We are proposing to permanently close Weston Road/Church Hill Lane to through traffic between Weston Green Road and Honingham Lane. The section to the west of the Norwich Western Link would be restricted to pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians only while the section to the east would be entirely closed approximately to the point where the road meets Blackbreck Lane. Access would be maintained to properties, businesses and agricultural land with access restrictions at either end.

With the Norwich Western Link in place the existing route between Weston Green and Ringland Hills would therefore be severed and vehicles would be diverted to alternative routes such as Ringland Lane (if it were kept open to all traffic), the A1067 Fakenham Road or the A47.



Weston Road near its junction with Honingham Lane at Ringland

Why are we proposing this?

The existing road is a narrow rural lane with limited forward visibility in places and the amount of traffic using it currently is low. Traffic flows on Weston Road were measured at around 80 users per day in October 2019, of which around 15% were pedestrians, cyclists or equestrians.

Based on existing levels of usage, installing a bridge to keep Weston Road open to through traffic would not represent good value for money and there is no requirement for habitat connectivity in this location.

What other options could we consider?

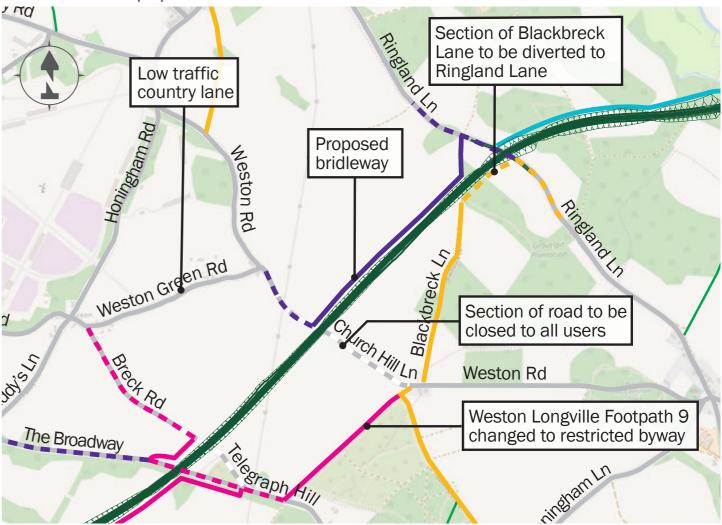
We could keep Weston Road/Church Hill Lane open to all through traffic, or to walkers, cyclists and horse riders only. However, we are not proposing this due to the low level of usage of this road and the ability of Ringland Lane to maintain connectivity across the Norwich Western Link more effectively. If Weston Road was to be maintained as a through road and an overbridge of the Norwich Western Link provided, there would be additional landscape and visual impacts due to the height of the new structure, in addition to the costs involved with constructing a new bridge.

Nearby Public Rights of Way

With Weston Road/Church Hill Lane closed to all users, we are proposing to provide upgraded walking, cycling and horse-riding routes parallel to the Norwich Western Link that would connect to crossing points further north and south:

- Weston Green Road is a tranquil rural route that is already attractive for non-motorised users due to its low traffic volumes. This would be promoted as a shared space between vehicles and other road users with appropriate speed limits defined and signage to warn vehicle users of cycles and pedestrians.
- » A section of an existing track (known as Blackbreck Lane) would be diverted to join Ringland Lane immediately to the east of the Norwich Western Link to prevent it being severed by the new road. Also on the eastern side, an existing public footpath (Weston Longville Footpath 9) would be changed to restricted byway standard so that it can also be used by, amongst others, cyclists and horse riders.
- » To the north west of the Norwich Western Link, a new section of public bridleway would be created to connect Weston Green with Ringland Lane.

An overview of the proposals for the Weston Road area is shown below.



Proposals for Breck Road (also known as Breck Lane), The Broadway and nearby Public Rights of Way

Breck Road (also known as Breck Lane) and The Broadway are the southern-most roads crossing the Norwich Western Link route. The Broadway is a narrow, tree-lined, rural lane running broadly east-west from Telegraph Hill in the east to Paddy's Lane in the west. Breck Road is a narrow rural lane with restricted forward visibility in places. It runs broadly in a south-easterly direction from Weston Green, connecting with Telegraph Hill at its south-eastern extent. Breck Road becomes Telegraph Hill about 150m east of Weston Green Road.

We are proposing to close Breck Road to through traffic where it crosses the Norwich Western Link route, with access maintained to properties, businesses and agricultural land. To the west of the Norwich Western Link, Breck Road would be restricted to pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians only while the section on the east side, where the road becomes Telegraph Hill, would be closed entirely. Suitable turning facilities would be provided on Telegraph Hill on the east side of the Norwich Western Link.

We are proposing to close The Broadway to motorised through traffic (with a traffic restriction to allow property access only). A green bridge would be installed over the Norwich Western Link, with a clearance of at least 5.3 metres. The new bridge would create an environmental crossing for bats and other species, as well as pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Motorised through-traffic from both Breck Road and The Broadway would be diverted to alternative routes such as the A47 to the south.



Artists impression of The Broadway green bridge (looking west)

Why are we proposing this?

The Broadway has been identified as a key location to support habitat connectivity across the Norwich Western Link, which is why a green bridge is proposed in this location. This would also be available to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Surveys indicate that these routes carry a low volume of traffic currently, with Breck Road carrying about 90 users per day and The Broadway carrying about 20 users per day in October 2019. In both cases about 10% of the total users were pedestrians, cyclists or equestrians.

What other options could we consider?

We could keep Breck Road open to all through traffic, or to walkers, cyclists and horse riders only. However, we are not proposing this due to the low level of usage of this road, and the proximity of The Broadway, which will maintain connectivity. If an extra bridge was provided at Breck Road, there would be additional landscape and visual impacts, in addition to the extra construction costs.

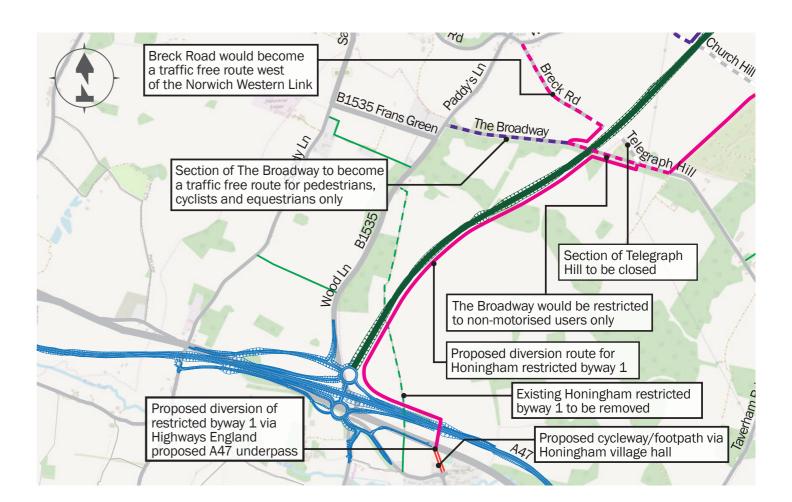
We could keep The Broadway open to vehicles. We are not proposing this due to the low level of traffic on this road. We could also prevent pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders from using the green bridge. However, we want to maintain connectivity for non-motorised users across the Norwich Western Link in key locations, both for local communities and for wildlife. Closing The Broadway entirely would also limit our ability to support people to walk and cycle in the local area.

Nearby Public Rights of Way

The following improvements are proposed in the vicinity of Breck Road and The Broadway:

- » A new short section of restricted byway would be created alongside the west side of the Norwich Western Link, connecting Breck Road to The Broadway for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.
- » To the south of The Broadway, Honingham restricted byway 1 would be removed between Wood Lane and the former A47 and replaced with a new section of restricted byway along the east side of the Norwich Western Link. People using this route would be separated from traffic by landscape screening. This route would provide connectivity from The Broadway to a new underpass crossing of the A47 proposed by Highways England. The route would cross the former A47 and a new shared cycleway/footway access to Honingham village would be provided through the village hall overflow car park.

An overview of the proposals for the Breck Road and The Broadway area is shown below:



Sustainable transport measures across the wider area

We want to build upon the benefits the Norwich Western Link road will create for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and bring in some additional measures to support more sustainable forms of transport. This will complement the longer distance walking and cycling routes already introduced as part of Broadland Northway.

We've sought input and ideas from local parish councils and other groups to come up with some suggestions for ways we could support people to walk, cycle and use public transport – these are listed below and shown on the map opposite. We want to hear from you about which you think would be most effective so we can prioritise them for inclusion.

These potential measures would complement the Transport for Norwich project, which is making it easier to travel in and around the city, with a focus on clean and shared transport.

Potential measures

1

Create a new crossing facility on the A1067 Fakenham Road at Attlebridge to help pedestrians and cyclists cross safely and confidently.



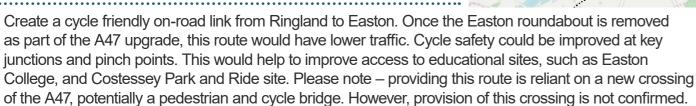
Create a new pedestrian crossing on the A1067 Fakenham Road to connect Ringland Footpath 1, south of the A1067, with Attlebridge Restricted Byway 4, north of the A1067.

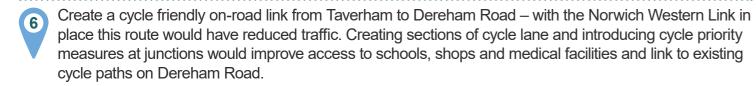


Create a new pedestrian and cycle crossing of Drayton High Road to improve connectivity with the Marriott's Way.

4

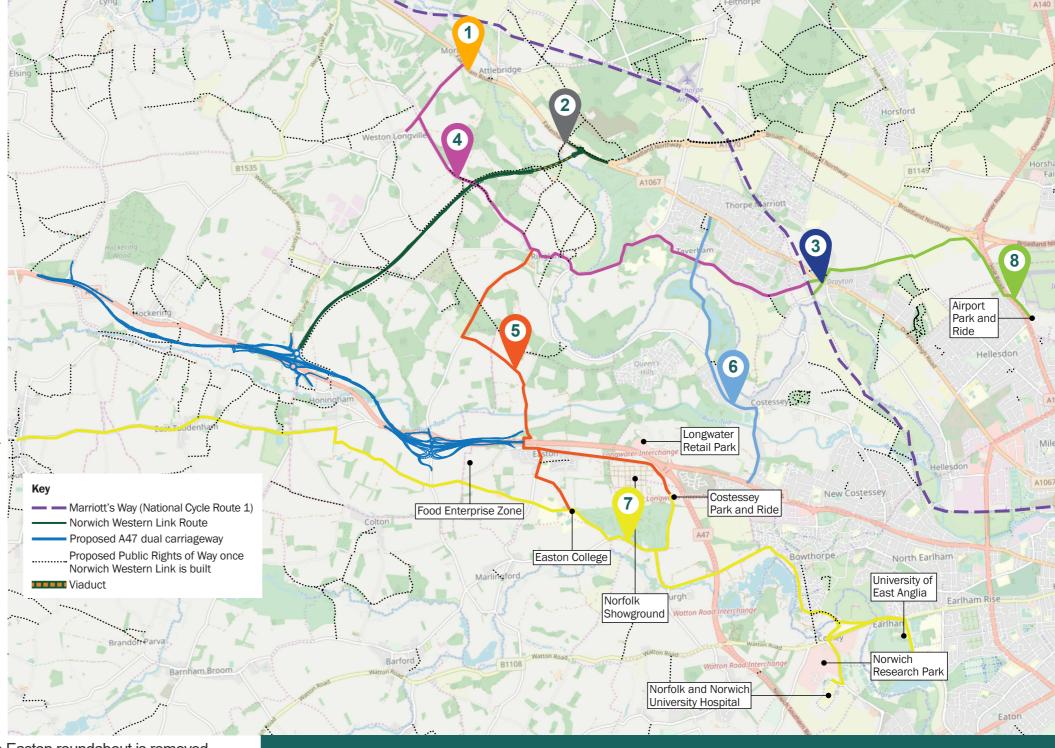
Create a cycle friendly on-road link towards central Norwich from Attlebridge and Weston Longville via Ringland and Taverham – improving cycle priority at junctions and on bridges on this lower traffic route would enhance access to schools and workplaces on the western edge of Norwich, and improve connectivity to the Marriott's Way (part of National Cycle Route 1).





Create a cycle friendly on-road link south of A47 from Mattishall to the Norfolk and Norwich University
Hospital and University of East Anglia – this route would benefit from reduced traffic once the nearby
A47 is dualled. Introducing cycle priority measures would improve access between residential areas,
medical facilities and employment areas, including the Food Enterprise Zone at Easton, Norwich
Research Park and Costessey Park and Ride site.

Improve cycle parking at and access to the Airport Park and Ride site from Drayton – this would provide opportunities to access Park and Ride bus services by cycling and improve connectivity to the Marriott's Way and onward destinations in the western fringe of Norwich.



What difference could these measures make?

- » Make it easier for people to walk, cycle or get a bus to important local facilities such as schools, shops and medical centres
- » Help people, including those with reduced mobility or a disability, to safely cross busier roads
- » Improve the health and quality of life of local residents by making it easier to access the countryside and walk and cycle for pleasure
- » Contribute to efforts to improve air quality in communities and in urban and suburban areas
- » Support commuters to shift from using their cars, helping to take vehicles off the roads at busy times
- » Improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, encouraging people to consider these as viable ways to travel
- » Make communities better connected and more pleasant places to live and visit

Bus strategy

We have been talking to bus operators about opportunities to improve bus services which could be supported by the Norwich Western Link.

Bus journey times would be likely to improve with the Norwich Western Link in place and congestion reduced on the existing road network. As a result, it may be viable for a bus operator to provide a new 'Western Arc' service through the more densely populated western suburbs of Norwich.

This would connect communities to medical facilities and employment areas including Norwich Research Park, the University of East Anglia (UEA) and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (NNUH) without the need to travel into central Norwich to change buses.

We have identified two potential Western Arc bus service route options:

- » Option A: Thorpe Marriott to NNUH/UEA via Taverham, Queen's Hills, Longwater and Bowthorpe.
- » Option B: Thorpe Marriott to NNUH/UEA via Drayton, Airport, Hellesdon and Earlham.

To support the Western Arc service we would also improve facilities at bus stops on the A1067 and along the route of the proposed 'Western Arc' bus route. This could include raised kerbs, new or improved shelters and electronic displays.

Potential new bus route options



Protecting the environment

We are committed to building the Norwich Western Link in an environmentally responsible way. We are continuing to carry out ecological and environmental surveys in the area and taking advice from statutory environmental bodies to inform our work and ensure we can take up-to-date information into account in our planning application.

We want to limit any adverse environmental impacts the new road may have and seek opportunities to enhance the environment in the area. We're currently developing these proposals and more detailed information will be shared in our next public consultation. However, our aims include:

- » Creating new habitats and improving existing ones in the local area to support a wide range of wildlife. We are likely to focus on creating and improving significant areas of woodland and wetland habitat.
- » Maintaining connectivity for wildlife in the area by creating structures across the road designed to help species cross safely. Our current proposals include two green bridges and two underpasses designed for use by wildlife, and these would be complemented by planting. The proposed location of these structures is shown on the Norwich Western Link Route Map in these consultation materials.
- » Not affecting the integrity of the River Wensum which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation, which can be achieved through the design of the viaduct on which the Norwich Western Link would cross the river and its flood plain, as well as through the construction methods used.
- » Minimising other environmental impacts such as noise and visual impact through, for example, landscaping, planting and screening. In addition, we would compensate for any areas of floodplain affected, meaning there would be no increased risk of flooding as a result of the project.



Artist's impression of the green bridge towards the southern end of the Norwich Western Link route (looking west)



The consultation runs from Monday 27 July to midnight on Sunday 20 September 2020.

We would encourage everyone to look through all the information available as part of the consultation before making their response. This information will be available to view via **www.norfolk.gov.uk/nwl** throughout the consultation period, where people can also respond by filling in the consultation questionnaire.

People who can't access the internet can request for paper copies of the consultation brochure and questionnaire to be posted to them – contact details for how to get in touch about this are below.

If you would like to request hard copies of the consultation brochure and consultation questionnaire...

Please email us at **norwichwesternlink@norfolk.gov.uk** or ring us on 0344 800 8020 and give us your postal address. We'll then put a copy of the brochure and consultation questionnaire in the post to you as soon as possible. The questionnaire can be returned to a freepost address (details below), meaning you won't need to put a stamp on your envelope.

If you would like to discuss the consultation proposals with staff involved in the project before responding to the consultation...

Staff will be available to discuss the consultation proposals via phone or internet calls during the consultation period. To book an appointment to discuss the proposals with members of the project team, please email **norwichwesternlink@norfolk.gov.uk** or ring us on 0344 800 8020 and we'll aim to arrange a time that is convenient for you. We will make weekday evening appointments available for people who have commitments during the day.

We would recommend people contact us as soon as possible after the consultation period has started to organise an appointment so that we can do our best to accommodate your request.



There are several ways you can respond to the consultation. You can:

- » Complete the consultation questionnaire online via www.norfolk.gov.uk/nwl
- » Complete a paper copy of the consultation questionnaire and post it to: Freepost Plus RTCL-XSTT-JZSK, Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH
- » Email comments to norwichwesternlink@norfolk.gov.uk
- » Write to: Freepost Plus RTCL-XSTT-JZSK, Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH

The deadline for responses to this consultation is midnight on Sunday 20 September 2020.

If you need further assistance please email us on **norwichwesternlink@norfolk.gov.uk** or ring us on 0344 800 8020 and we'll do our best to assist you. However, please could all responses to the consultation be made in writing using one of the methods outlined above.

