

Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing Statutory Pre-application Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Project aims and funding

Why do we need the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing?

The Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing (“the Proposed Scheme”) is needed to deliver the following objectives:

- To support Great Yarmouth as a centre for both offshore renewable energy and the offshore oil and gas industry, enabling the delivery of renewable energy NSIPs and enhancing the port’s role as an international gateway;
- To improve access and strategic connectivity between Great Yarmouth port and the national road network thereby supporting and promoting economic and employment growth (particularly in the Enterprise Zone);
- To support the regeneration of Great Yarmouth, including the town centre and seafront, helping the visitor and retail economy;
- To improve regional and local access by enhancing the resilience of the local road network, reducing congestion and improving journey time reliability;
- To improve safety and to reduce road casualties and accidents, in part by reducing heavy traffic from unsuitable routes within the town centre;
- To improve access to and from the Great Yarmouth peninsula for pedestrians, cyclists and buses, encouraging more sustainable modes of transport and also reducing community severance; and
- To protect and enhance the environment by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and minimising the environmental impact of the Proposed Scheme.

How much would the Proposed Scheme cost and how would it be funded?

In 2017 Norfolk County Council, as highways authority, submitted an Outline Business Case (i.e. a bid for a funding contribution) to the Department for Transport (DfT). The submission to DfT set out the project cost as approximately £120m. The Autumn Budget 2017 allocated a Government contribution of £98m towards the Proposed Scheme. The remaining cost will be locally funded and is likely to come from a range of sources.

Can this Government funding be used for other local transport proposals?

No, the funding contribution from the DfT specifically relates to the Proposed Scheme. Therefore the funding cannot be used on other transport schemes.

Obtaining development consent for the project

Why is development consent under the Planning Act 2008 needed?

The Planning Act 2008 (‘the Planning Act’) provides a specialised regime for assessing and consenting nationally significant infrastructure projects. On 26 January 2018, Norfolk County Council formally requested that the Secretary of State for Transport should use the power under Section 35 of the Planning Act to direct that the Proposed Scheme should be treated as development for which development consent is required.

In the direction of 26 February 2018, the Secretary of State confirmed that he was satisfied that the scheme is nationally significant. He therefore directed that the Proposed Scheme, is to be treated as development for which development consent under the Planning Act is required.

What is the effect of needing development consent?

The effect of the Secretary of State for Transport's direction means that Norfolk County Council will require a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act in order to construct, maintain and operate the Proposed Scheme.

An important feature of the Planning Act regime is that it is designed, so far as possible, to provide a single forum for assessing every aspect of the merits of a proposed project. The intention is that if a DCO is made, the need for other regulatory permissions and consents should be kept to a minimum. For example if the DCO is granted, planning permission will not be required. The DCO can also include a wide range of provision about matters related to the Proposed Scheme, such as compulsory acquisition of land, road closures and alterations, traffic restrictions and matters concerning the River Yare (including a Deemed Marine Licence).

What is the process for obtaining development consent and how long will this take?

The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) is responsible for administering the DCO process on behalf of the Secretary of State. This includes the appointment of Inspectors to act as the "Examining Authority" who will examine applications for DCOs and provide recommendations to the Secretary of State for Transport, who then decides whether the DCO should be made. The process of obtaining a DCO can be summarised in 6 key stages:

	Stage	Approximate Timescales for the Proposed Scheme
	Pre-application - During this period the scheme proposals are developed and pre-application consultation and publicity is undertaken.	Norfolk County Council intends to submit a DCO application to PINS in Spring 2019.
	Acceptance - Before a DCO application can proceed to assessment, it will be checked for compliance with various requirements, including that the County Council has carried out effective pre-application consultation and publicity.	PINS, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, has 28 days to decide on whether to accept the application.
	Pre-examination - If the application for a DCO is accepted, this will be the subject of notification and publicity to be carried out by Norfolk County Council. The public will be able to register with PINS and provide a written summary of their views on the application. This will enable them to become an Interested Party and participate in the Examination. Preparation for the	The pre-examination process does not have a prescribed period, however this generally takes in the region of three months and is expected to take place in Spring/Summer 2019.

	Examination will take place, including a Preliminary Meeting which Interested Parties will be invited to attend.	
	Examination - During the DCO examination, those who have previously registered to have their say as Interested Parties will be invited to provide more details of their views in writing and can also request open floor hearings and compulsory acquisition hearings. The Examining Authority may also decide to hold Hearings.	The Examination period lasts up to a maximum of six months and is expected to start in Summer 2019.
	Decision - Within three months of the examination period concluding the Examining Authority will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will then decide, within a period of three months, whether to make the DCO.	The decision from the Secretary of State for Transport can take up to six months following the end of the examination period. This is expected in Spring/Summer 2020.
	Post Decision – There is an opportunity for legal challenge of the decision.	The Planning Act requires that a challenge is made within six weeks of the Secretary of State's decision.

The Proposed Scheme is currently at the Pre-application stage.

When is the application for a DCO proposed?

Norfolk County Council propose to make the application for a DCO for the Proposed Scheme in Spring 2019.

Consultation

What consultation has been undertaken on the Proposed Scheme?

Norfolk County Council has undertaken two previous consultations. These were as follows:

Non-statutory Initial Engagement Consultation (Stage 1) undertaken in 2016/2017. The purpose of this consultation was to invite and assess views on congestion within Great Yarmouth and the surrounding area, to share emerging proposals and to understand the level of support for the scheme. The key findings from this consultation were:

- Congestion in Great Yarmouth is considered a serious issue;
- The Proposed Scheme would make journeys faster;
- Congestion would be reduced by the new crossing.

Non-statutory Scheme Development Consultation (Stage 2) undertaken in Summer 2017. The purpose of this consultation was to invite and assess views on the scheme development work so far. The key findings from this consultation were:

- Support for the scheme remains high;
- There is overall support for the Proposed Scheme of a bascule bridge at 4.5m clearance;
- A key concern relates to how the bridge affects port business and the passage of vessels on the river;
- The consultation identified a number of suggestions regarding how the scheme could be improved.

Why are you consulting again?

As part of the process of applying for a DCO, Norfolk County Council is required to carry out pre-application consultation and publicity in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 and have regard to the responses received.

Norfolk County Council is undertaking its pre-application (Stage 3) consultation between 20 August 2018 and 5 October 2018. The consultation shows the current Proposed Scheme that is intended to form the basis of the application for a DCO. The responses to this consultation will help the Council refine and resolve the Proposed Scheme and will be documented in a consultation report, which will form part of the documents submitted in the application.

Development of the Proposed Scheme

How did you select the potential location for the crossing?

Assessment work to consider possible options was undertaken between 2003 and 2009 which led to Norfolk County Council adopting a preferred route for the Third River Crossing in December 2009.

Have any other options been considered?

During the examination of crossing options the following alternatives have been considered and discounted:

Tunnel – a tunnel option would have no impact on the operation of the port once complete but would take approximately 3 years to construct, and would have a greater impact on the port during construction. A tunnel would require mechanical and electrical systems for ventilation, drainage and fire protection. It would be difficult to prevent flood waters from entering the tunnel so temporary closures due to flooding could be considered a possibility.

Fixed bridge - a fixed bridge that was high enough to allow vessels to pass beneath without opening would need much greater areas for approach ramps. This would have greater impact on surrounding residential and business areas and would make it very difficult to link with the existing highway network on either side of the river.

Swing Bridge – a swing bridge would require a greater area of quayside to accommodate it when open. At the Stage 2 consultations in Summer 2017 a swing bridge was present as an alternative to the preferred option of a twin leaf bascule bridge. The results of this consultation confirmed the view that there is overall support for the Proposed Scheme of a bascule bridge at 4.5m clearance.

Environmental Assessment

How will the impact on the environment be assessed?

The Proposed Scheme will be an “EIA development”, which means that it will be subject to a statutory Environmental Impact Assessment under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

An Environmental Statement will accompany the application documents for a DCO. This will identify, describe and assess the likely significant effects of the Proposed Scheme on the environment both during construction and once it is in operation.

For this Stage 3 pre-application consultation in Summer 2018, a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) has been produced which provides information on the potential environmental effects of the current Proposed Scheme. The PEIR uses information that is currently available to us and recognises that aspects of the Proposed Scheme are yet to be finalised. A non-technical summary of the PEIR has also been produced.

Both the PEIR and its non technical summary will be available to view on Norfolk County Council's website (www.norfolk.gov.uk/3rc) from 20 August 2018. The documents form part of the pre—application consultation and the Council will welcome comments on the content.

Will flooding affect the new crossing? How are we mitigating this risk?

The new crossing will be designed at a level above even extreme tidal flood events where climate change is considered. The 0.1% Annual Exceedance Probability (1 in 1000 chance of occurrence in any given year) tidal flood event including an allowance for significant sea level rise is below the proposed level of the new crossing.

The flood risk to the new crossing as well as the impact of the new crossing on flooding is being investigated using a hydraulic model of the River Yare through Great Yarmouth. The new crossing will be designed to limit the impact of the scheme on flooding within Great Yarmouth and we are working with the Environment Agency closely to ensure there are no adverse effects resulting from the new crossing in terms of flood risk.

Land

Are you talking to landowners whose properties are located within the footprint of the scheme?

Norfolk County Council will need to acquire land in order to build the Proposed Scheme. Where we do not already own or control the land, we have started negotiations with the relevant landowners. In addition many of the residential properties directly affected by the Proposed Scheme have already been purchased by NCC.

However, as part of our application for Development Consent Order we intend to apply for powers which would allow us to acquire land, and rights over land,

compulsorily (subject to payment of compensation) if it has not been possible to acquire by agreement.

Would there be any compensation be offered to those who live near the Proposed Scheme?

Under Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 compensation can be sought by people who own and also occupy certain property that has been reduced in value by physical factors caused by the scheme but have not had any land acquired for the scheme itself.

The physical factors are noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke and artificial lighting and the discharge on to the property of any solid or liquid substance. Other factors such as the loss of view or privacy cannot be included in the claim for compensation.

To claim, you must be the owner of the property on the date the road first comes in to public use. This is known as the 'relevant date'. You must also still be the owner on the date you claim.

In addition to being the owner, you must also occupy the property as your home at the date you claim. The exceptions to this are where you have let the property to someone else or there is another legal reason preventing you from occupying the property.

The first day for claiming compensation is a year and a day after the new or altered highway first comes into public use. This is known as the 'first claim day'.

Design

What will the new crossing look like?

The Stage 2 Consultations in summer 2017 helped confirm our view that the best solution for an opening bridge is to provide a double leaf bascule bridge with a minimum clearance of 4.5m above Mean High Water High Spring Level (MHWSL) to the underside of the bridge when lowered.

The height and horizontal alignment of the bridge deck is already fixed. However, at present we would like to retain some flexibility regarding the type of opening mechanism to allow contractor innovation and hopefully reduce cost.

For the pre-application consultations we have produced illustrative images showing range of opening mechanisms being considered. The opening mechanism will be fixed when we submit our application for a Development Consent Order.

What provision would be made for cyclists and pedestrians?

Great Yarmouth has a cycle network, which includes Pedalway Routes that utilise Southtown Road and Admiralty Road on either side of the River Yare. The current Proposed Scheme has cycle facilities to link these two routes. These would include a 4.5m segregated footway/cycleway on the north side and a 2.5m footway on the south side.

[What are the opportunities for open space?](#)

The area around the bridge support structure at Bollard Quay on the western side of the River Yare provides the opportunity for a new public space, for pedestrians and cyclists. The type of mechanism developed for the double leaf bascule bridge, and the impact and footprint upon Bollard Quay, will further inform the design of the public space and connecting pedestrian/cycle routes. The public space will also be designed to allow access for maintenance to the crossing.

The western approach to the crossing features pedestrian and cyclist routes north and south of the embankment structures, to enhance connectivity between Southtown Road and destinations west of this area including Suffolk Road, the allotments, and Southtown Common. There is an opportunity to enhance these areas through varied planting and tree species.

Traffic impacts

[What are the traffic impacts of the new crossing?](#)

A highway traffic model has been used to forecast impacts on traffic as a result of the Proposed Scheme. This takes account of the predicted number of openings of the bridge to allow the passage of vessels. The pre-application consultation materials provide details of the forecast vehicle flows with and without the scheme for the future years of 2023 and 2038.

[What are we doing to coordinate our plans with those being proposed by Highways England for the A47?](#)

Norfolk County Council is working closely with Highways England (HE) to ensure their proposed improvements to the A47 junctions scheme are compatible with the Proposed Scheme and to maximise the overall benefits of both schemes. We are currently undertaking traffic modelling on behalf of HE to determine the most appropriate A47 junction improvements to support the planned enlargement and probable signalisation of the Vauxhall Roundabout.

Part of Highways England's overall scheme was to provide a right turn out of the railway station junction onto Acle New Road. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to implement this right turn sooner, so with agreement and funding from HE, we have already constructed this as part of our programme of construction works and it opened in May 2018.