

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 1 – 30 AUGUST 2007

REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER - ENVIRONMENT

(Author: David Spencer, Principal Planning Policy Officer)

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL: A47 to A1067 LINK IMPROVEMENT CONSULTATION

Summary: This report informs Members of the content of a Public Consultation on route options for an improved link between the A47 and A1067. The options indicate improving links between Hockering at the A47 and Lenwade at the A1067. The southern half of any proposed link would be in Breckland. The document that is currently subject to consultation is enclosed. The information can also be accessed online at <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/A47toA1067link>

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Norfolk County Council as Highways Authority is currently consulting on options to improve road links between the A47 at Hockering through to the A1067 Fakenham to Norwich road at Lenwade. The proposal is not described as being part of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NDR) but has its origins in evidence arising from that project that there is a significant local problem of traffic travelling between the A47 and A1067. The issue directly affects Breckland communities at Hockering, Lyng and outlying hamlets. The County Council has put forward five options to enhance links and is seeking comment by 7th September.

2. KEY DECISION

- 2.1 This is not a key decision.

3. EQUALITIES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND CRIME & DISORDER

- 3.1 This report raises no issues relating to Equalities, Human Rights and Crime and Disorder.

4. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 4.1 The matters raised in this report fall within the following Council priority:
- A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities

5. SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The consultation proposes five road options and these are set out in more detail in the consultation leaflet set out at Appendix A. Options 1, 2 and 3 all start at the Wood Lane / Berry's Lane junction east of Hockering on the A47 and broadly follow the existing link from Wood Lane to Weston Hall Road via Weston Green Road. Options 1 and 2 would involve re-aligning the route at various points, whereas option 3 is the minimum option and involves on-line improvements along the existing road network.
- 5.2 Option 4 would involve a new junction immediately east of Hockering and would involve diverting link traffic along Heath Road in Hockering. Option 5 would involve utilising the existing grade separated junction for North Tuddenham and using the existing Lyng Road and Blind Line to link up with Weston Hall Road.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE OPTIONS

6.1 This section of the Report is structured around the consultation material provided by Norfolk County Council.

Need

6.2 The current daily flows of traffic between the A47 and A1067 would support the need to improve the links between these two key strategic roads. There is a widespread perception that this proposal is intended to provide the final element of the original NNDR route and the additional 3,000 vehicles to use the link assuming the NNDR is built would support this perception. It is also considered that an opportunity has been missed to work with the Highways Agency to provide an enhanced junction at the Wood Lane/Berry's Lane interchange. Such a junction would provide the basis of a A47/A1067 link road and would have presented an option to resolve the Mattishall Road Junction safety situation. Breckland Council would welcome clarification of what the standard the junction at Wood Lane onto the A47 would entail and whether this cost has been reflected into options presented?

Preferred Option

6.2 Option 2 presents the best value for money whilst achieving the objective of delivering a short distance link between the A47 and A1067 that would avoid Hockering and remove existing local industrial traffic from residential areas. Support of this option would include retention of the group of veteran oak trees at the junction of Weston Green Lane and Sandy Lane.

Unacceptable Options

6.3 Option 4 presents the most unacceptable option and should be immediately discounted. Whilst it is the second cheapest option it is the second longest route from the A47 to A1067 for those travelling Fakenham to Norwich and vice versa. Critically it will unacceptably and directly affect communities in Breckland, notably the Heath Road part of Hockering. Additionally, the route cuts across a valley landscape (remnant of medieval deer park) to the east of Hockering and passes within 200m of Hockering Primary School. Additionally the route would not remove local industrial traffic from the Wood Lane area. The very limited benefits of the route in terms of its relatively low cost do not outweigh the considerable environmental harm to Breckland residents, the local landscape impact and the cost of additional traffic management to limit traffic from still using Wood Lane and Hockering.

6.4 Option 5 should also be immediately discounted due to its cost, length, limited attractiveness to users and the considerable environmental impact from constructing a lengthy option. Using option 5 heading east to west adds an additional 5km (3miles) to the journey and would still require the County Council to manage local traffic around Wood Lane and Hockering. Option 5 would radically alter the rural and quiet character in this part of Breckland.

Associated Issues

6.5 The primary objective of the proposed improvements should be to reduce the effects of through traffic on local communities. Improving road safety and junctions, reducing effects on private properties, protecting the environment and value for money are all important factors to take into account. On this basis Option 2 would meet these priorities. However, the consultation recognises that the proposed link will attract significant additional traffic if the NNDR is built. Breckland Council seeks clarification on the impact of the

NNDR on this proposal in terms of the consequences for the local road network if the NNDR is built but these improvements are not implemented. This would help assess whether the primary objective of reducing through traffic on local communities is exacerbated as part of the wider NNDR scenario.

7. OPTIONS AVAILABLE

- 7.1 Respond to Norfolk County Council's consultation on the proposed options for the A47 to A1067 link improvements using the analysis in Section 6 of the Report subject to any additional comments from the Panel.
- 7.2 Do not respond to Norfolk County Council's consultation.

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 To enable Breckland Council's views as the Local Planning Authority to inform the preparation of a preferred route for A47 and A1067 Link Road.

RECOMMENDATION TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 1

- 8.2 Members views are requested and that subject to any amendments that the analysis in section 6 of this report form the basis of Breckland Council's response to Norfolk County Council's improved link between A47 and A1067 consultation document.

This report has taken account of the need for compliance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and the requirements of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998. This report raises no matters to which attention specifically needs to be drawn under the legislation.