



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Programme Update: Fenland District
Council Overview and Strategy Meeting.

05/12/2022

Version History

Revision Number	Revision Date	Nature of Revision	Checked by	Reviewed by	Approved by

Purpose

To provide the Fenland District Council Overview and Scrutiny meeting with an update on,

- Wisbech Rail
- A47 Dualling
- Wisbech Access Strategy
- Fenland Stations

Programme Update

Wisbech Rail

At its meeting of the 16th of November, the Combined Authority Transport and Infrastructure Committee approved the drawdown of funding to enable an Options Assessment Report to be undertaken to consider rail modes for a service between Wisbech and March. The paper can be viewed here, [Wisbech Rail Committee Paper](#). Final approval will be sought from the Combined Authority Board on 30 November.

A47 Dualling

In February 2021 National Highways, formerly Highways England, commenced a strategic assessment of the A47 between the A16 and the Walton Highway east of Wisbech. Using the project Control Framework (PCF) process National Highways reviewed existing evidence, including the work delivered previously by the Combined Authority. It assessed current and future network conditions, as well as reviewing and identifying improvement options for the A47 between Peterborough and Wisbech. The review was also informed by other highways proposals including options for the A47/A1101 roundabout junction currently being developed by National Highways.

A total of 19 options were considered as part of the study work and sifted to three options for further consideration. These were:

- Potential Solution 1 - Maintain the existing A47 alongside junction/access improvement (e.g., the consolidation of minor road junctions and private accesses).
- Potential Solution 2 - Maintain the existing A47 alongside junction improvements.
- Potential Solution 3 - Offline dual carriageway between Thorney bypass and the B198 roundabout at Wisbech.

Potential Solution 1 records the highest BCR of 2.86, followed by Potential Solution 3, 0.95, which is in a lower value for money category. Finally, Potential Solution 2 has the lowest BCR of -5.45. This analysis highlighted Potential Solution 1 as the attractive option.

National Highways work concluded that Potential Solution 1 is being progressed further by incorporating it into a Route Optimisation Study which is looking to identify targeted safety solutions. This work started in September by National Highways and is expected to take six months. The other potential solutions identified by the study work are not being progressed by National Highways.

A briefing note about the A47 National Highways work was circulated to Transport and Infrastructure Committee members and is attached for information.

Wisbech Access Strategy

The first phase of the Wisbech Access Strategy consists of three schemes,

- a) A47/Elm High Road Roundabout
- b) A47 Broad End Road Roundabout
- c) Elm High Road/Weasenham Land Roundabout

The detail design for all three sites is complete and technical approval has been granted from National Highways for Broad End Road and draft approval achieved on Elm High Road with the A47.

Whilst the majority of land parcels are either complete or completed there remains 3 outstanding plots, all three are on the Elm High Road/A47 site. Two of the sites are progressing well, however, one plot was owned by a company that went into receivership resulting in the plot being managed by Crown Land. This has led to increased work to satisfy their requirements.

The Business Case draft has been prepared and is being reviewed by an independent third party. An initial meeting was held to discuss feedback and a response to the points raised have been submitted by the Business Case team.

The Broad End Road scheme was considered for Transforming Cities Funding (TCF), however, the programme of construction does not fit within the timescales of the TCF and subsequently, it was agreed with Cambridgeshire County Council that other projects should be considered for TCF.

National Highways continues to develop their Road Investment Strategy 3 pipeline project which seeks to improve capacity at the Elm High Road/ A47 roundabout. Both the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council have engaged with National Highways and strongly recommended that any improvement to the Elm High Road/A47 roundabout would require the improvement to the Weasenham Lane/Elm High Road Junction. National Highways recognise the impact to the Weasenham Lane Junction if the Elm High Road/A47 roundabout is improved and therefore, have included the Weasenham Lane junction within their options.

The development and assessment work are expected to continue by National Highways with a view that the Department for Transport will decide about the future progression of the project and Roads Investment Strategy 3 being published in 2024.

A briefing note was circulated to members of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee about the Wisbech Access Strategy and is attached for information.

Fenland Stations

The scope CPCA funded works at Fenland Railway Stations cover three elements Manea , March and Whittlesea Railway stations.

March railway Station

The works on the station waiting room, car park and CCTV system is completed and open to the public.

Manea Railway Station Car Park

Works are now substantially complete. There have been delays with bad weather affecting progress. There is currently an issue with the CCTV mast preventing the commissioning of that system and the opening of the car park. FDC are actively investigating and seeking options.

Whittlesea railway Station.

FDC have prepared an options report for consideration by CPCA for future funding

Report End





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Agenda Item: 2.2

Wisbech Rail

- To: Transport and Infrastructure Committee
- Meeting Date: 16 November 2022
- Public report: Yes
- Lead Member: Mayor Dr Nik Johnson
- From: Anna Graham, Transport Programme Manager
- Key decision: No
- Forward Plan ref: N/A
- Recommendations: The Transport and Infrastructure Committee is asked to decide the approach for Wisbech Rail, either:
- a) Continue to promote and lobby for heavy rail based on the information provided by the 2020 business case and GRIP 3b and recognise that potential delivery of Wisbech to Cambridge timeframe is linked to the delivery of Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (EACE) or,
 - b) Undertake an Options Assessment Report to provide the economic analysis on mode options, including existing information on heavy rail, based on a service operating between Wisbech and March which removes the current dependency on EACE whilst still being mindful of the future strategy to link into Cambridge.
 - c) If option b) is selected recommend to the Combined Authority Board to approve the drawdown of £80,000 from the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the development of an Options Assessment Report and to seek delegated authority to the Interim Head of Transport to enter into a Development Services agreement with Network Rail following consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer.

Voting arrangements: For items a) and b) A simple majority of all Members present and voting

For item c) A vote in favour by at least two thirds of all Members (or their Substitute Members) appointed by the Constituent Councils, to include the Members appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council or Peterborough City Council, or their Substitute Members

To be carried, the vote must include the vote of the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor when acting in place of the Mayor.

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The paper seeks Members views on the next steps for Wisbech Rail and subject to approval of option b) seek Combined Authority approval for the drawdown of funding to enable an options assessment report to be carried out.

2 Background

- 2.1 A Business Case and Governance in Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) 3b was completed in the summer of 2020 and identified that a heavy rail, with a two trains per hour service direct to Cambridge from Wisbech, and a centrally located station, would be a viable option.
- 2.2 Following engagement with Department for Transport (DfT), Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and Network Rail, the March 2021 Combined Authority Board agreed that Network Rail would undertake a review of the existing work and assess options for the Wisbech to March line. It was intended the outcome of this work would coincide with the results of the Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (EACE) Outline Business Case.
- 2.3 Network Rail undertook:
 - Business Case review;
 - PACE (Project Acceleration in a Controlled Environment) review of documentation;
 - Engineering review; and
 - High Level Light Rail.

3. Network Rail Review

- 3.1 Network Rail's review concluded that there was a strong strategic focus within the 2020 business case, which supported the need for public transport links from Wisbech and the potential benefits of connecting to Cambridge.
- 3.2 Significantly, however, Network Rail recommended removing assumptions about EACE. The Wisbech to Cambridge 2020 business case assumed that EACE would provide the necessary infrastructure upgrades to enable increased services to Cambridge and as a result these costs were not included within the Wisbech to Cambridge Business Case. In Network Rail's view this assumption should not have been included and therefore all costs required for Wisbech to Cambridge should be part of the business case as a standalone project.
- 3.3 It was also assumed that one train path may be available at Ely North Junction and a further train path could be sought through EACE. Network Rail's work has shown that there is currently no capacity at Ely and securing future train paths is highly competitive and there is no guarantee the Wisbech to Cambridge would be successful.
- 3.4 Whilst the EACE Outline Business case demonstrates decarbonisation and connectivity benefits, it does, however, require a significant funding, with a total cost of over £450 million. Government have not yet announced the next steps for EACE.
- 3.5 Network Rail's review of the 2020 Wisbech Rail Business Case also noted that:
 - The passenger demand figures are different – higher - to those that have been prepared for the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement Business Case;
 - The assessment of cost for each mode option needed greater detail; and,
 - Further detail around timetabling at Cambridge would be needed.

- 3.6 In addition to the review of the existing work, Network Rail also produced a high-level feasibility study for light rail, this was produced following engagement with DfT and ORR whose view was that further options needed to be considered. The report concluded that there is potential for a light rail passenger operation between March and Wisbech highlighting Tram-Train or Very Light Rail could be used. However, economic assessment of each light rail mode and a potential autonomous pod initiative were not provided within the report and would require further development to understand Benefit Cost Ratios.
- 3.7 The Network Rail review concluded that lower cost light rail may offer a more credible transport solution and recommended further work be undertaken to examine light rail options.
- 3.8 An initial proposal for Wisbech Rail next steps outlined an approach which included the development of a business case for a service between Wisbech and March and sought to develop light rail to an outline business case standard. Engagement with Fenland District Council and Members it was agreed that transport connectivity for Wisbech was a priority, however, heavy rail continued to be supported.
- 3.9 Following this initial engagement two options are presented for consideration, the first is to continue to press for heavy rail recognising that potential delivery of Wisbech to Cambridge timeframe is linked to the delivery of EACE. Secondly, an Option Assessment Report is developed rather than a complete business case to provide the economic analysis on mode options, including existing information on heavy rail, based on a service operating between Wisbech and March which removes the current dependency on EACE whilst still being mindful of the future strategy to link into Cambridge.

3 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Network Rail has estimated £300,000 for the next phase of work to produce an options assessment Report. Wisbech Rail currently has £230,000 approved budget available. Subject to the approval of the Options Assessment Report option £80,000 to be drawn down from the Medium-Term Financial Plan, totalling £310,000. £300,000 needed for the Network Rail Options Assessment Report and £10,000 for any additional engagement with strategic stakeholders.
- 4.2 The MTFP has £5.7 million subject to approval for Wisbech Rail in 2022/23.

4 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Subject to the approval of recommendation b) the Combined Authority will enter into a Basic Services agreement with Network Rail to undertake the Option Assessment Report.

5 Public Health Implications

- 6.1 The objectives of increasing connectivity to Wisbech are to improve access to employment and educational opportunities, and to support economic growth in a sustainable manner which enables improved health.
- 6.2 In addition, the existing preliminary designs include a cycleway to encourage active travel supporting both health and improved wellbeing.

6 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

7.1 Wisbech Rail seeks to provide an alternative to car use – supporting economic growth in a sustainable way.

7 Other Significant Implications

8.1 None.

8 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Wisbech Rail Project Review

9.2 Appendix 2 – Options Assessment Report Scope

9.3 Appendix 3 – Wisbech to March Light Rail Potential Final Report

9 Background Papers

10.1 None.



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A47 Dualling: Briefing Note

16th November 2022



Version History

Revision Number	Revision Date	Nature of Revision	Checked by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1.0	26.10.2022	Update	AG	TB	TB

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on the outcome of the Strategic Assessment of the A47 between Peterborough and east of Wisbech undertaken by National Highways

2 Background

- 2.1 In February 2021 National Highways, formerly Highways England, commenced a strategic assessment of the A47 between the A16 and the Walton Highway east of Wisbech. Using the project Control Framework (PCF) process National Highways reviewed existing evidence, including the work delivered previously by the Combined Authority. It assessed current and future network conditions, as well as reviewing and identifying improvement options for the A47 between Peterborough and Wisbech. The review was also informed by other highways proposals including options for the A47/A1101 roundabout junction currently being developed by National Highways.
- 2.2 An additional and secondary highway section was also considered along the single carriageway section of the A47 between East Tilney and the A47/A17 junction at Kings Lynn, located within Norfolk County Council's authority.
- 2.3 The Combined Authority had, until the commencement of the National Highways funded review, promoted this scheme on its own responsibility. Securing the National Highways review achieved a key objective of the Combined Authority – commitment from National Highways for the project's development.

3 Update

- 3.1 Following analysis of relevant traffic data – counts, journey times, accidents, and road closures, National Highways concluded from their perspective, that:
 - a) There is not a congestion problem along the route.
 - b) A lower number of incidents were recorded than expected for this type of road.
 - c) Expected growth in traffic is unlikely to lead to the route becoming over capacity by 2050; and
 - d) Road closure data for the route showed that, in a typical month over the years 2014 to 2019, there were 1.2 'medium' closures (delays of 1 to 3 hours) and 2.5 'major' closures (delays of greater than 3 hours).
- 3.2 A total of 19 options were considered as part of the study work and sifted to three options for further consideration. These were:
 - a) Potential Solution 1 - Maintain the existing A47 alongside junction/access improvement (e.g., the consolidation of minor road junctions and private accesses).
 - b) Potential Solution 2 - Maintain the existing A47 alongside junction improvements.
 - c) Potential Solution 3 - Offline dual carriageway between Thorney bypass and the B198 roundabout at Wisbech.
- 3.3 Potential Solution 1 records the highest BCR of 2.86, followed by Potential Solution 3, 0.95, which is in a lower value for money category. Finally, Potential Solution 2 has the lowest BCR of -5.45. This analysis highlighted Potential Solution 1 as the attractive option.

- 3.4 Whilst Potential Solution 1 has high value for money, it achieves this by addressing the incidents along the section of the A47. The offline dualling, Potential Solution 3, has the highest present value of benefits, reflecting its user benefits to road users as well as safety benefits due to shifting demand to higher quality road sections, and effectively reducing demand on the de-trunked section of the A47. However, its high-cost results in a low BCR.
- 3.5 National Highways undertook an Environmental Risk Assessment which identified physical environmental constraints in the proximity to the proposed options. This is a high-level assessment which RAG rates potential effect on a wide range of environmental factors such as air quality, cultural heritage, biodiversity, and noise. Offline dualling had the highest number of amber ratings of all the potential solutions, however, the study concluded that further analysis of the environmental effects would be required.
- 3.6 One key area for the project was regarding the potential for flooding and potential subsequent cost for flood mitigation. National Highways work concluded from the modelling data flooding was not a risk due to the existing high embankments of the Nene. The Environment Agency model did show risk of coastal flooding due to sea level rise, but it is understood as being a wider issue for the Fens and therefore was not further considered by the study.
- 3.7 The work concluded that further consideration is made for Potential Solution 1. Whilst this road experiences concentrations of collisions which overall are below the expected rate for this type of road there is a potential investment case for small, targeted interventions focussing on addressing safety issues.
- 3.8 The analysis of the offline dualling showed that the potential benefits were outweighed by the overall cost, resulting in a poor BCR.
- 3.9 National Highways confirmed that the work which identified the Potential Solution 1 is being incorporated into a Route Optimisation Study which is looking to identify targeted safety solutions. This work started in September by National Highways and is expected to take six months. The other potential solutions identified by the study work are not being progressed by National Highways.
- 3.10 The Devolution Deal recognises the importance of the A47 as an east- west connectivity and its potential to unlock economic and housing growth. This is reflected in the Combined Authority's current policy position as outlined in the adopted Local Transport Plan of 2020, which states that the Combined Authority supports "upgrades to the A47 and associated junctions between Kings Lynn, Wisbech and Peterborough, to improve labour market accessibility to and from the Fens and Wisbech Garden town."

- 3.11 The draft Local Transport and connectivity plan (LTCP) highlights the need for, “A package of improvements to the A47 between Peterborough, Wisbech and Kings’ Lynn, including much-needed upgrades to junctions and interchanges are necessary to increase accessibility across the region. In the longer-term, we will continue to explore the case to increase capacity on the A47, further reducing journey times and reliability as well as address safety for all road users including commuters and freight.” The Combined Authority will therefore, continue to engage with National Highways to improve the safety and journey time reliability of the A47.
- 3.12 The A47 Alliance, of which the Combined Authority is a member, continues to lobby for significant investment in and dualling of the A47. At the time of writing, the A47 Alliance is preparing a letter to the new prime minister asking for the A47 to be considered for investment.

4 Financial Implication

- 4.1 None

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None

6 Public Health Implications

- 6.1 Air quality is considered as part of National Highways Environmental Risk Assessment which identifies physical environmental constraints in the proximity to the proposed options.

7 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 7.1 Paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 refer.

8 Other Significant Implications

- 8.1 None

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – A47 Improvement Scheme SOBC
9.2 Appendix 2 – A47 Staged Overview of Assessment Report

10 Background Papers

- None



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Wisbech Access Study: Briefing Note

16 November 2022



Version History

Revision Number	Revision Date	Nature of Revision	Checked by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1.0	11.11.2022	Update	AG	TB	TB

2 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Wisbech Access Strategy

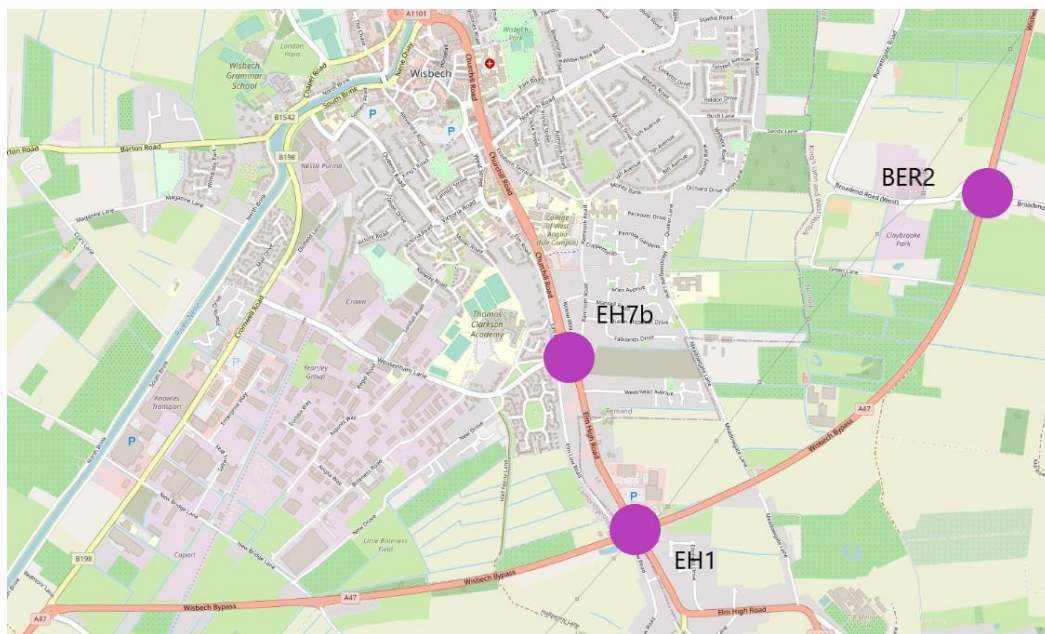
3 Background

- 3.1 The Fenland Local Plan (adopted May 2014) includes proposals for 3,550 new homes in Wisbech and 30 hectares of new employment land to deliver around 2,500 new jobs to 2031.
- 3.2 In order to stimulate this growth, £1m from the Growth Deal fund and £0.5m Combined Authority funding was approved at the October 2017 and March 2018 Combined Authority Board as part of the Priority Transport Schemes paper to undertake feasibility studies of potential transport interventions (highway and rail).
- 3.3 Cambridgeshire County Council and Fenland District Council commissioned the Wisbech Access Study, a large-scale option assessment of multiple highway improvement schemes in multiple locations within Wisbech. The purpose of the study was to facilitate the growth sites identified within Fenland District Council's Local Plan.
- 3.4 Further assessment of the Wisbech Access Study options took place to determine the preferred package of projects to progress to Outline Business Case.
- 3.5 During May 2018 Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council and Wisbech Town Council approved the Wisbech Access Strategy and recommended to the Combined Authority to release £10.5m Growth Deal funding.
- 3.6 Both the Business Board of 26 November 2018 and subsequent 28 November 2018 Combined Authority Board approved the release of funding specifying that the funding would expire at the end of March 2021.
- 3.7 The first package of the Wisbech Access Strategy consisted of 5 schemes. The five projects were later reduced to three with both Southern Access Road and New Bridge Lane/Cromwell Road Signalisation paused following concern regarding the effects on traffic flows of a proposed development of an energy from waste plant in Wisbech.
- 3.8 Pausing the two schemes was formerly agreed via change control to the Business Board on 27 July 2020. The change control also contained a new budget, £6m of Local Growth Fund would be provided with a further £3.9m available subject to approval from the Combined Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 3.9 The three projects continued with detailed design, however, by Autumn 2020 risks to the deliverability of the project were emerging. Land negotiations were stalling and options to mitigate the risk of progressing Compulsory Purchase were beginning to be explored. Later, further risks materialised, including, the diversion of a utility whereby the estimate received was significantly higher in cost and duration than was anticipated.

- 3.10 In June 2021 Cambridgeshire County Council reported to the Wisbech Access Strategy Project Board on the outcome of their review of the project. The review had shown progress with mitigating the key project risks, however, it identified that to deliver all three projects the total forecast project outturn cost would be £19.5m far exceeding the available budget.
- 3.11 In response, Cambridgeshire County Council provided a report which considered the available options for progressing the project, assessing each option on deliverability, price, and value for money. As a result, a change control was presented to the Business Board of 19 July 2021 removing the construction phase from the scope, creating a pipeline project.
- 3.12 The Business Board considered the Wisbech Access change control and rejected it as the project would no longer meet the Local Growth Fund Criteria. This was later discussed at the July 2021 Combined Authority Board Meeting.
- 3.13 It was recognised at the July Combined Authority Board meeting that there was merit to having a pipeline project and it was agreed that the Wisbech Access Strategy project would seek approval, via the production of a business case, to drawdown the £1.88m required to complete the procurement of land and detailed design from the Combined Authority's subject to approval funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 3.14 At its meeting of the 25 August the Combined Authority agreed to fund the project to the end of the current detail design stage and acquiring the necessary land, creating a pipeline project.

4 Update

- 4.1 **The three sites continue to be progressed to the scope as agreed by Board in August 2021.**



BER2 – Broad End Road
EH1 – Elm High Road/A47

EH7b- Weasenham Lane/Elm High Road

- 4.2 The detail design for all three sites is complete and technical approval has been granted from National Highways for Broad End Road and draft approval achieved on Elm High Road with the A47.
- 4.3 Whilst the majority of land parcels are either complete or completed there remains 3 outstanding plots, all three are on the Elm High Road/A47 site. Two of the sites are progressing well, however, one plot was owned by a company that went into receivership resulting in the plot being managed by Crown Land. This has led to increased work to satisfy their requirements.
- 4.4 The legal agreements, Section 6 and Section 8, with National Highways and Norfolk County Council continue to progress, further meetings to finalise these agreements have been scheduled for the end of November.
- 4.5 The Business Case draft has been prepared and is being reviewed by an independent third party. An initial meeting was held to discuss feedback and a response to the points raised have been submitted by the Business Case team.
- 4.6 The Broad End Road scheme was considered for Transforming Cities Funding (TCF), however, the programme of construction does not fit within the timescales of the TCF and subsequently, it was agreed with Cambridgeshire County Council that other projects should be considered for TCF.
- 4.7 National Highways continues to develop their Road Investment Strategy 3 pipeline project which seeks to improve capacity at the Elm High Road/ A47 roundabout. Both the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council have engaged with National Highways and strongly recommended that any improvement to the Elm High Road/A47 roundabout would require the improvement to the Weasenham Lane/Elm High Road Junction. National Highways recognise the impact to the Weasenham Lane Junction if the Elm High Road/A47 roundabout is improved and therefore, have included the Weasenham Lane junction within their options.
- 4.8 National Highways have shortlisted their options to,
 - EH1 design (the Wisbech Access Strategy design developed by CCC)
 - EH1 design and the County Council design for the local road improvement on the A1101/Weasenham lane
 - Enlarge roundabout
 - Enlarge roundabout and including the Weasenham lane/A1101 Junction improvement
- 4.9 The development and assessment work are expected to continue by National Highways with a view that the Department for Transport will decide about the future progression of the project in the summer of 2023.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The refunds from utility companies is underway and these refunds will be returned to the Local Growth Fund as it was originally paid out of this funding stream. Due to this, the forecast is affected, and the financial reporting is under review to see how better it could be shown.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Section 6 and Section 8 agreements are progressing as referred to in the main body of the report.