

Dear

I am concerned about, and opposed to, any Norwich Western Link road across the Wensum Valley. Norfolk Cabinet's recent decision for the 'Route C' has many ecological, climate and financial risks associated with it.

The Wensum Valley is irreplaceable and should be preserved for future generations to enjoy. Please press the pause button on route C and take the time to consider alternatives to this destructive road.

Yours sincerely

Points you may like to include:

Destruction of Local Ecology

- The Wensum River Valley is an SSSI and a SAC. It is given this protected status because it is a very rare chalk stream habitat. Fed from pure, clear, constant water from underground chalk aquifers and springs, it provides sources of clean water that is ideal for wild creatures to breed and thrive. The Wensum is the largest chalk stream in England, and its habitats are bound to be impacted by the construction and use of Route C. The Council has assessed route C as a "moderate" risk to the SAC although it has, so far, done no real ecological assessments. This is against the precautionary principle.
- Bat surveys have recorded two possible maternity roosts of Barbastelle bats along route C. These bats have protected status due to their rarity. Once again, the Council have assessed the bats at "moderate" risk despite no field work being carried out yet. Again this is against the precautionary principle.
- The Council say the road will deliver a 'net ecological gain'. This is impossible when building a 4-lane highway through mature woodland and SSSI sites. Planting saplings does not replace mature trees with their associated flora and fauna. The building of the road involves long term ecological destruction of a much wider area than the final road and breaks up a corridor for wildlife into smaller units, which is not sustainable for all species.

Cost

- The Council say the road will cost £152m. Yet road projects always go up in cost. The Council's own track record with the NDR is very poor – a prime example of escalating costs under poor contract management. The NDR final costs are unknown still, despite two big price hikes in recent years. The council figures for the

NWL do not include all costs, and with expensive roundabouts and a viaduct, may well reach £350m. If the current bid to Government is successful, a maximum of £129m will come from central government, meaning the council will have to borrow the rest and pay back the interest on a multi-million pound loan for 50 years. At a time when NCC is cutting adult social care and childrens' services, can we really justify spending this money on one road?

- The Norfolk Council have already signed an 'S151' letter to say they will pick up the financial shortfall if Wensum Link road overruns. Already local taxpayers will be paying for the NDR loans for 50 years. This road will just add to the burden on Norfolk Council Tax payers for the next half century.

Climate Change Commitments

- On April 15th, the Council adopted a motion on Climate Change where they stated that they “recognise[s] the serious impact of climate change globally and the need for urgent action”. The Climate Emergency is not going to be tackled by building more roads. Building route C will be in direct contradiction of a 2018 Committee on Climate Change report that recommended to government that carbon emissions from transport should be reduced by 44% between 2016 and 2030. Norfolk needs to play its part in reducing the UK's transport emissions.
- The Council say that moving to electric vehicles will help but uptake of these is slower than expected, and they have a heavy carbon footprint themselves from embodied emissions in the vehicle and battery manufacture. These embodied emissions can be around 15 tonnes of CO₂ that happen in Year 0 of the vehicles life, so the carbon cost is immediate just as we need to rapidly reduce emissions by 2030. Different solutions are required!
- This proposal does not include any provision for public transport. There are other solutions to a road such as mass public transit and smarter working e.g. from home, close to home, and internet technologies. Rat running could be tackled with roads being closed except to local traffic. Cycle routes could be developed for local journeys.

Your Personal Concerns

- Please use your own words, and voice your own concerns about Route C. How will this personally impact you and your family now and in the future?

