



## **NWT Position Statement on Norwich Western Link**

Norfolk Wildlife Trust understands that a Western Link for the Northern Distributor Road (NDR) now called Broadland Northway, is being considered, which will link the end of the current NDR on the A1067 with the A47 near to Easton.

The landscape between the A47 and A1067 is a well-connected network of habitats that are important for wildlife, including ancient woodlands, grasslands and floodplains. These are not only along the River Wensum but also along the corridor of the River Tud and towards Easton.

Whilst a key focus of the design is rightfully to ensure there is no damage to the River Wensum – a site of international importance for wildlife – the landscape contains many significant other areas of importance for wildlife. Several of these are designated as County Wildlife Sites, which are the best semi-natural habitats in Norfolk after nature reserves and SSSIs. Further areas are also in the process of being designated as County Wildlife Sites within the next few months. The connection between the habitats is of particular importance in this area, for wildlife including bats.

We are therefore very concerned about the potential damage by the Western Link to these important habitats and their connectivity and are currently looking in detail at the recently released shortlist of options before making our comments to the Council.

We will be looking at the direct impacts as well as indirect impacts such as pollution and habitat severance. Whichever route is proposed, we would expect the Council to be able to demonstrate that, in line with national planning policy, it is deliverable with a net gain in habitats overall and without any loss to irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland.

**Notes:**

County Wildlife Sites represent the best semi-natural habitats in Norfolk outside statutory sites (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)) and nature reserves.

There are approximately 1,300 such sites in Norfolk, most of which are in private ownership.

The wildlife value of these sites is recognised in all Norfolk Local Plans and District Councils have particular regard for these sites when assessing planning applications.

Although notification as a County Wildlife Site is in recognition of a site's importance for wildlife, importantly, notification does not confer any constraints or conditions regarding site management.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust is keen to advise and work in partnership with site owners to help maximise a site's wildlife benefits. Sites are only designated as CWS with the permission of the landowner. As result there are a number of areas throughout the county that are known to, or likely to be of CWS value that are not currently recognised as CWS.