

**Norman Baker MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
LONDON SW1P 4DR

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Dear Norman

**Development Pool and remaining decisions**

We have now had a chance to look at the final Development Pool decisions announced yesterday. I have to say that we were very disappointed with some decisions and with the overall package announced. We have commented in our press release on the virtually blanket approval for the road projects, and particularly the conditional decision to allow the Norwich Northern Distributor Route to proceed.

We are also disappointed that what was supposed to be a competitive process, with only the best schemes given approval, was in the end fully funded by the Treasury, reducing the ability of the Department for Transport to discriminate between good value and poor value schemes, or to support only those projects that support the wider strategic objectives of the Department, particularly in respect of carbon reduction.

These decisions mean that three of the four bypasses and ring roads to which we submitted detailed objections in October have been approved, despite the doubts we raised about their environmental impact, effect on increasing traffic, and value for money, as well as the lack of consideration of alternative measures.

However, two of these four schemes still have further decisions to be made – the Norwich Northern Distributor Route and the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road – and I am writing today to ask about the process for gathering information and how these decisions will be made and scrutinised.

**Norwich Northern Distributor Route (NNDR)**

The funding announced for this scheme is conditional upon Norfolk County Council funding a package of complementary sustainable transport measures in the city centre. Will you tell us how these conditions will be determined, including how much investment will be required, how any proposals will be assessed, and which Minister within the Department for Transport will be making the final decision on whether the conditions for funding have been met?

We also want to make sure that the public and local campaigners are involved in the development of these proposals, and that local groups are consulted for their views on the adequacy of the plans before the final funding decision is made. I am asking you, therefore, to write to Norfolk County Council to request that this happens.

## **Bexhill-Hastings Link Road (BHLR)**

The funding decision for this road has been delayed while East Sussex County Council and other partners are asked to consider other options, including other road management proposals and local rail.

We are pleased with this decision, but request again local campaigners are involved in the Department's work with the scheme promoters and other discussions about these options. Can you assure us that East Sussex County Council will also be required to make sure local groups are given the option to feed back on alternative transport proposals, and on new environmental mitigation measures proposed for any re-submitted Link Road project? The detailed comment on the DfT press release yesterday said that, "Over the next three months the Department will work alongside the scheme's promoters and other local and regional partners to gather further evidence on the optimal solution for the area." We will be happy to help the Department in this process.

We assume that, as with the funding decisions announced today, the decision on the BHLR will be made by the Secretary of State herself, with your guidance, and would be grateful if you could confirm this.

Finally, thank you and Department officials for the involvement we and others have had in this Development Pool process, despite our concern about the results. It does contrast greatly with the way BIS has run the Regional Growth Fund process, which has been opaque and not open to public involvement or scrutiny.

I would be happy to discuss these points with you, perhaps alongside ways forward for local authority major scheme funding.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Joseph  
Chief Executive, Campaign for Better Transport

