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Chairman – Cllr Martin Wilby
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Copy to Grant Shapps MP

Please ask for:
Contact number:

27 October 2020

Dear Baroness Vere

I write as chair of the A47 Alliance, which represents the interests of stakeholders along the A47 trunk road route from Lowestoft to the A1 at Peterborough. The local authorities, businesses and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) along the A47 have a common goal of a fully dualled A47, backed up by a wealth of evidence showing the wide range of benefits that this would provide. MPs from along the route have supported A47 improvements and recently raised this with yourself and in the house.

The Alliance has previously agreed its shorter-term priorities to lead to full dualling of the A47 and has strong evidence to show that these projects will contribute to government objectives. The priorities and evidence are captured in the Alliance's summary business case, which I attach, and which was presented to government prior to the 2019 budget when the trunk road programme for 2020 to 2025 was announced. The priorities will, amongst other things:

- Unlock the 125,000 houses and 75,000 jobs planned along the A47
- Create over £330m in GVA uplift
- Generate over £200m in benefits from enhanced productivity.

The Alliance believes that, in the light of challenges presented since the announcement, these schemes are even more important than ever. They contribute to government's levelling-up agenda by improving access and connectivity to the coast, providing an opportunity to level-up the economic and social disparity being experienced by many coastal areas in the east. The impacts of Covid-19 have been disproportionate on tourism and hospitality, a key sector in the economy of the area served by the A47. Again, investment to improve connectivity would signal confidence in economic recovery and overcome one of the main barriers to accessing tourism hot-spots in the region. Finally, and as touched on in the business case, improvements to the A47 will help accelerate delivery of housing and jobs

growth including investment into the nationally important energy sector sited off the eastern energy coast.

The Chancellor's recent announcement about the one-year Spending Review in November 2020 provides a potential opportunity for government to confirm government investment into the A47. We appreciate that this might well be a more limited announcement than if government were to be announcing a full trunk road programme. However, we consider that investment into one or more of the A47 Alliance priorities would be a good fit given government's agenda and Rishi Sunak's statement outlining that the spending review would focus on three areas (including) investing in "infrastructure to deliver our ambitious plans to unite and level up the country, drive our economic recovery and Build Back Better."

I hope that you can take this on board, and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Martin Wilby
Chair of the A47 Alliance



Department
for Transport

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5 November 2020

Dear Councillor Wilby,

Thank you for your letter of 27 October regarding the ambition of the A47 Alliance to see the whole route between Lowestoft and Peterborough upgraded to dual carriageway.

In March 2020, the Government announced that it will make £27.4 billion available to Highways England for the operation, maintenance, renewal and enhancement of the strategic road network (including the A47) between 2020 and 2025. At the same time, we listed the objectives and projects that we expected Highways England to deliver with this funding in the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2).

RIS2 included confirmation that the A47 schemes announced in the first RIS would be completed, and a project to improve Elm Road Junction with the A1101 would be developed so it could be funded for construction in RIS3. I appreciate that you and other members of the A47 Alliance had hoped to see further dualling schemes included in RIS2, but the competition for funding was fierce and it was necessary to make hard choices on prioritisation.

The RIS2 settlement is the full amount available for strategic roads over the coming five years, and has confirmed the investments that will be pursued in that period. We will shortly begin the process of developing RIS3, expected to cover investment between 2025 and 2030, and I encourage the A47 Alliance, working with Transport East as the sub-national transport body, to review and strengthen the case for further A47 upgrades to inform that process.

Thank you for your active engagement with this issue.

*Yours,
Charlotte*

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON