EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff (WSP | PB) has been commissioned by Kier on behalf of Suffolk County Council (SCC) to prepare a strategic study of potential Ipswich Northern Route (INR) transport scheme options.

This Stage 1 interim report sets out the existing transport conditions and baseline situation to 2031 in the north of Ipswich, based on the existing planning backdrop and current committed schemes. The report intends to identify constraints and opportunities which may affect the potential design of options to be developed in the next stage of the study.

The INR study aims to consider multi-modal transport opportunities including road, rail, bus, cycle and other strategic interventions in order to facilitate and support the delivery of housing and employment growth in the North of Ipswich.

Specifically the aim of the Study is to:

“Strategically review, short list and assess, the strategic viability of transport capacity improvements, in order to facilitate and support the delivery of housing and employment growth in north Ipswich and the wider Ipswich area”

The geographical scope for identification and implementation of INR options focuses on a broad arc to the north of Ipswich, covering an area broadly defined as between the A12 to the east, and the A14 to the west, as far south as the current boundary of Ipswich and as far north as between Coddenham (to the west) and just below Ufford (to the West).

Outside of this geographical area for option delivery, the wider study area for highway impact assessment considers the wider regional strategic road network using the Suffolk County Transport Model (SCTM). This enables an assessment of wider impact analysis of INR options across the County.

This interim study identifies that Local Plans and the East Anglia LEP expect significant growth both in terms of housing and employment within the wider Ipswich area. On this basis an evidence base is identified to highlight the importance of improving the integrated transport network and to tackle congestions in order, to and deliver the required residential and employment growth targets.

This report identifies the existing issues of capacity on the highway network, and gaps in public transport infrastructure and the cycle network provision. It has also identifies a growing local proportion of vehicles ownership, especially in rural areas, which encourages people to travel by car, increasing the constraint on network capacity.

The current local and strategic highway network suffers from frequent and severe delays, generating pollution, reducing safety of road users and constraining the local and regional economic market. The congestion on the A14 has also an impact on strategic areas such as the Port of Felixstowe, with particular issues related to the Orwell Bridge Crossing.

In consideration of a high level study of the environmental constraints, three indicative corridors for the potential delivery of a northern relief road have been identified and tested in initial modelling, within the SCTM. These options have been identified as an Outer Route Corridor, Middle Route Corridor and Inner Route Corridor.
From initial modelling analysis, it appears that an Inner Route Corridor and Middle Route Corridor have the largest potential for attracting trips from Ipswich, and the Orwell Bridge Crossing. These options also perform well in terms of reducing overall travel times and distances travelled. An Outer Route Corridor provides more of strategic benefit but provides less benefit to reducing congestion with Ipswich.

In order to conduct a robust comparison between the options, and develop them further, further modelling in the next stage of this study is required as the junction types, sizes and connectivity of the route will have a significant impact on the performance of these options in the model.

Overall, this report has demonstrated that the wider Ipswich area is expected to continue to growth in the future, and action is needed to avoid the adverse impact this will likely have on the local and strategic highway network, potentially limiting housing and employment growth. Indicative northern relief road options have been identified and these will now be developed further, and informed through further modelling, within the second stage of this study.
7.5 INITIAL ROUTE CORRIDOR OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED

7.5.1 Based on the reviewing the environmental and built environment constraints, three indicative route corridors areas have been identified for option development of a Northern Relief Road, each set at varying distances north of Ipswich.

7.5.2 It is expected that an integrated transport solution will be the key to deliver expected growth in the area, including bus network improvements within the Town and increased capacity of the local rail offering, through making the most of rail infrastructure already in place (such as Westerfield Railway Station).

7.5.3 It is however expected that the trigger for improvements would be led with the development of a northern relief road, based on the evidence identified within this stage 1 report.

7.5.4 In this regard, three indicative corridor alignments have been identified to help facilitate further option development in the second stage of the study. For reference the three corridors have been identified as:

- Outer Route Corridor;
- Middle Route Corridor; and
- Inner Route Corridor.

7.5.5 Figure 7-1 below shows an indicative map of these three corridors. All the corridors link between the A14 and A12 but are spaced at varying distances north of Ipswich, in turn opening up options for different junction connections on the A14 and A12.

Figure 7-1 Initial Indicative Ipswich Northern Route Options