



Baroness Vere of Norbiton
Minister for Roads, Buses and Places
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Monday 21st September 2020

Dear Baroness Vere,

A47 Corridor Improvement Schemes

Thank you for your letter dated 21st August – setting out the timetables for the six committed A47 Corridor Improvement Schemes.

We are both deeply disappointed to hear of these further delays – as are local councillors, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and a great many businesses and Norfolk residents.

As you will appreciate, the commitment to funding these Improvement Schemes was made back in 2014, with the campaign leading up to those schemes having begun many years previously.

While we understand that such schemes take time (and of course want to ensure that they are delivered correctly), it is unacceptable that, when completed, it will have taken, in the case of all but one of the six schemes, over ten years to deliver and have them open.

After decades of under investment in Norfolk and the East, we have seen some fantastic progress made in recent years – the dualling of the A11 being one such example. However, the A47 is a key artery for Norfolk and the failure to deliver the much needed improvements in a timely fashion is seriously holding the county back. Public anger is growing rapidly amidst a growing sentiment after each delay that timetable announcements mean nothing, and that Highways England are dragging their feet.

Having met with Highways England on numerous occasions over recent months and years, we are now of the view that the body is unfit for purpose. Each meeting brings news of further delay and complication. Highways England seem to have little incentive to drive forward these projects and bring them to fruition in a speedy fashion, and there are now widespread doubts that they can deliver the projects at all. Six years without a shovel in the ground. Two more before the works may begin. It can't go on.

We both request a formal roundtable, along with the other MPs in Norfolk, Waveney and Cambridgeshire who have a strong interest in this issue, to discuss this latest bad news – as well as the future of Highways England.

Yours,

George Freeman MP
Member of Parliament for Mid Norfolk

Jerome Mayhew MP
Member of Parliament for Broadland