Purpose of report:

- To update members on:
  a) the A12 Route Based Strategy; and
  b) on progress of the A11 Fiveways to Thetford improvement scheme.

Recommendation:

1. To note the report

a) A12 Route Based Strategy

1 Background

1.1 At the RTF meeting on 22 June 2012 a paper was presented updating members of the Secretary of State for Transport’s response to the review which examined whether government had the right approach to operating, maintaining and enhancing the strategic road network, carried out by Alan Cook the non executive chairman of the Highways Agency.

1.2 One of the recommendations of the review accepted by the Secretary of State is for the Highways Agency, working with local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships, to initiate and develop route based strategies. The strategies will be owned by the Highways Agency.

2 Choice of First Three Routes

2.1 The Highways Agency was tasked with producing a small number of these strategies focussing on locations where there are known road based issues with limited solutions as to how they may be addressed. These are to be produced by 2013.

2.2 This will enable determination of how future route based strategies should be developed. This includes; how routes are defined; the inclusion of local roads and lessons learnt on the process of producing the strategies, including engagement with local stakeholders. The programme of further route strategies will then be agreed.

The key objective of the strategies is to address road based issues on the strategic road network, and form the basis for making decisions on funding for the strategic road network for the next spending review period.
2.3 The Agency will produce three route-based strategies in the current financial year, namely the A1 west of Newcastle; A12 from M25 to the A14 and A120 from the A12 to Harwich; and M62 Leeds to Manchester.

2.4 These initial strategies will be focused upon locations where there are known roads based issues, with either no readily identified or only limited solutions. Geographical scale, spread of locations, mix between motorway and all purpose trunk road and maturity of local partnership arrangements, were all determinants in the Agency and Department of Transport jointly agreeing the locations.

2.5 The first three locations will test a variation of route types i.e. a route or routes around a conurbation; one from point A to point B on the SRN; and one which encompasses part of a strategic national corridor.

2.6 Newcastle is one of the City Deal locations with the focus on the A1 west of the city. The A12 and A120 east of the A12 were deemed to be most suitable examples of a strategic national corridor location. The M62 links the city regions of Manchester and Leeds and has significant economic importance. It will provide the opportunity to complement closer work already happening between the two city regions.

3 Strategy Inputs

3.1 Work will focus on roads based issues that have a direct impact on economic growth and development, both now and in the future. The strategy will be based on an evidenced approach to investment on the route that supports national and local economic growth. A review of relevant recent studies and views of stakeholders will be used to form the evidence base.

b) A11 Fiveways to Thetford

4 Progress

4.1 Enabling works started on site on 7 June 2012. This has included temporary fencing, reptile fencing, archaeology and site clearance.

5 Programme

5.1 During November site clearance will be undertaken in preparation for the main start of works in early 2013. The site clearance will require some overnight closures of the A11.

A Start of Works exhibition at Elveden village hall will be held between Thursday 22 November and Saturday 24 November.

6 Further Information

6.1 Newsletters and other updates about progress of the scheme are available on http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/a11-fiveways-to-thetford-improvement/

7 Conclusion

7.1 The report is to be noted.