

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF A KEY DECISION CABINET

ITEM:	ROTHERWAS ARCHAEOLOGY:OPTION FOR PRESERVATION OF THE RIBBON AND COMPLETION OF THE ROTHERWAS ACCESS ROAD
Members Present:	Councillors: RJ Phillips (Leader), LO Barnett, AJM Blackshaw, H Bramer, JP French (Deputy Leader), JA Hyde, JG Jarvis, DB Wilcox.
Date of Decision:	6th September 2007
Exempt:	No
Confidential	No
This is a key decision because It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards	
A notice was served in accordance with section 15 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulation 2000	
Urgent Decision:	No
Purpose:	To approve the recommendation that the appropriate approach to completion of the Rotherwas Access Road in the context of the advice received from English Heritage as to the best method of preserving the archaeological remains that the Rotherwas access Road be completed and the Rotherwas Ribbon be preserved in accordance with Option F of this report.
Decision:	THAT the Rotherwas Access Road be completed and the Rotherwas Ribbon be preserved in accordance with Option F of this report.
Reasons for the Decision:	Option F will ensure completion of the road to the original time scale at the lowest cost whilst preserving the Rotherwas Ribbon in a manner approved by English Heritage.
Options Considered:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consideration has been given to diverting the course of the road, suspending the construction of the road for 6 months and to stopping the construction all together. In addition to the financial considerations outlined below, consideration must also be given to planning implications. Options other than F and G would require further planning consents. 2. The Council's contractor Owen Williams, has been asked to give indicative costs to 7 options that each seek to preserve the archaeology by deploying the preservation solutions as well as a 6 options that would determine completion (or otherwise) of the road. Cost estimates and details for options A-E may be found at appendix (e) and (f) but are summarised as follows:

- A. Diversion of the road to the South
£9M appendix (e)
- B. Diversion of the road to the North
£7M appendix (e)
- C. Creation of a bridge
£10M appendix (e)
- D. Creation of a tunnel
£110M appendix (e)
- E. Abandoning the road
£6M appendix (f)
- F. Continuation of the road on its proposed course
£445k
- G. Suspending the construction of the road for 6 months
£430k

(plus additional costs according to which option is subsequently chosen).

- 3. English Heritage has previously advised that, while acknowledging the wishes of the Council that more opportunities needed to be given to the public to view the monument, that part of the structure already revealed must be covered up soon. To that end the works to implement the preservation part of the solution have already begun. These works are entirely reversible (by design) and provide adequate protection for the foreseeable future.
- 4. Options A – E present the Council with very serious financial challenges that, should any of these options be approved, would require the entire capital programme and medium term financial management strategy to be revised. Cabinet would need to consider whether or not diversion of the road in these options represented good value for money when placed alongside other needs of the County.
- 5. Option G would, from indicative costs, add £430,000 to the overall cost of the road in addition to whatever final option were chosen. It is also likely that the overall cost would rise for inflation and, it should be noted, that any delay will be likely to damage, delay or inhibit the aims of the Rotherwas Futures project.
- 6. Accordingly, the recommendation of this report is that the Cabinet approve option F – continuation of the road along its proposed course over the design solution recommended by English Heritage.