

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 22 MAY 2009

Question from Mr J Barton, Hereford.

The arguments on the route of a bypass for Hereford swung from west to east before finally settling on the western route. In 2008 Cabinet announced they would build the western route, however, recent reports announce a re-opening of the east-west debate.

Conservative and Labour Governments have failed to support a bypass with any route; the concept was finally abandoned by Government in the 1990s.

Successive traffic studies have concluded that as more than 90% of traffic is local a bypass is not required, the bypass was subsequently renamed the outer distributor road (ODR).

Neither central Government nor Government agencies appear to have plans for a bypass or an ODR for Hereford.

The current loan figure for the Council is £115m, soon to rise to £130m, roughly equivalent to the entire annual budget.

The estimated cost has grown from £50m in 2005 for a proposed western route, to £130m, of which £60m has been requested from central Government.

The estimate for the Rotherwas access road was £12m to be paid for by developer contributions; the final cost was £20-25m. Developer contributions were not forthcoming; the road was paid for by local taxpayers and presumably added to the loan, the estimate of £130m for the ODR should be viewed in this context.

- 5.1 *What is the justification for re-opening the debate on an east v west route and from the many traffic reports that have been undertaken, where will the ODR distribute traffic from/to?*
- 5.2 *With no central Government support or funding available, council finances in a poor state and the current economic climate, where will the funds for this road come from if planning permission and developer contributions cannot be relied on?*