

OUTLINE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE

Directorate	Economy and Environment
Scheme Name	Southern Link Road
Budget Holder	Mark Averill, Service Director Environment and Highways

Project aims and objectives:

Scheme description and demonstration of links to corporate priorities and savings plans.

The Council is seeking to progress the Southern Link Road (SLR) to a point where the scheme can be delivered on the ground. The scheme previously featured as a part of the delivery programme for highway infrastructure and had reached a point where construction on site was due to commence. A change in Council priorities saw the removal of road building from the delivery plan, this change in stance also removed the progression of work to deliver a Western Bypass for the city of Hereford.

This capital bid is intended to:

- Southern Link Road
 - Fund the design check that is now necessary, the design is a number of years old and design standards have been tweaked by DfT as a part of the regular update of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.
 - Fund the work required to submit a planning application for the required haul roads and compound for the scheme.
 - Fund the necessary ecology and environmental surveys that are required as a part of the new planning permissions and to allow the council to discharge the conditions on the planning permission that exists for the approved route of the Southern Link Road.
 - Commence negotiations for land acquisition, and compulsory purchase process.
 - Updated traffic model
 - Revised scheme cost
 - Review and re-submission of the full business case
 - Construction, design and commercial support

Links to County Plan priorities:

Community: The delivery of the SLR will allow for the removal of a high proportion of traffic that currently accesses the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone via the A465 and A49 corridors. This will help in restoring a sense of place to the Belmont Road, reducing the current community severance that exists on the A465.

A better quality network, with less traffic, will remove some of the blockers associated with decisions to not adopt sustainable modes of transport for short journeys.

Economy: The creation of a new network of roads around the City will ensure that business traffic is able to access the business parks and Enterprise Zone without impacting on the city. This will reduce cost and encourage investment.

The creation of the Southern Link Road, and the other revenue funded work that is coming forward, will give local businesses confidence to invest in the city's enterprise park and business hubs.

By removing unnecessary through traffic from the city centre local retail, leisure and hospitality businesses will be better placed to welcome visitors to the city.

Environment: Traffic levels in the city are high, and with that comes pollution in the form of NO_x and particulate pollution (PM10 and PM2.5). This pollution is known to affect the development of the young and to impact on the health of adults with respiratory illnesses.

The schemes will be designed such that they are sympathetic to the environment, with planting on site and on nearby sites planned as an integral part of the schemes.

Estimated costs and funding sources:

	2023/24	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project					
Southern Link Road	800	2,200	2,000	5,300	10,300
TOTAL	800	2,200	2,000	5,300	10,300
Funding sources					
Capital Receipts	800	2,200	2,000		5,000
Corporate Funded Borrowing				5,300	5,300
TOTAL	800	2,200	2,000	5,300	10,300
Revenue budget implications					
TOTAL					

Benefits and risks:

The anticipated benefits and risks of the proposed project plus risks of not going ahead with the scheme.

- By investing capital in this way, starting with the Southern Link Road, then the City will have started on its journey to create resilience, better control its traffic and will allow for space within the city centre to be re-purposed to provide a better sense of place.
- The residents of Herefordshire have long expected the delivery of a bypass for the city, customer satisfaction will be improved when work on the SLR is commenced.
- Businesses will welcome a reduction in lost time traversing busy city centre corridors, freeing up resource for investment in the various enterprises.
- A reduction in traffic in the city centre will allow for a more punctual bus service, giving residents the confidence to swap their travel modes.
- Less traffic will also improve the active travel choices of our residents. They will be able to travel on quieter streets with less pollution.

Risks

- Costs have risen significantly since the southern link road was originally tendered and the proposed budget is insufficient to construct the scheme. A re-visit of the full business case and a bid to Government will be required to provide the full funds required.
- The Western Bypass and Eastern River Crossing have yet to progress to the full business case stage, a detailed plan will need to be prepared to allow for both schemes to progress to deliver the required resilience for the City and to unlock the benefits both schemes will deliver. This piece of work is reliant upon revenue funding.