

CABINET – 11 FEBRUARY 2026
RESPONSE TO MEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Cllr Rosemary Dartnall

Question:

The total amount of public money spent on the controversial and now-stalled North West Relief Road project reached a staggering £39m. The project was advanced determinedly by the council despite no written confirmation of increased funding from the Department for Transport and warnings from our external auditors about risks related to substandard project governance. This money was spent between 2019 and 2025. We in Shropshire have absolutely nothing to show for it.

Please list what exactly this money was spent on, including a list of amounts paid to each named contractor.

Response:

The table, which will be published with the answer to the question, shows the supplier and payments made against the North West Relief Road Project in the period 2018/19 to 2026. These are split between the Oxon Link Road and North West Relief Road projects, as is a requirement for financial monitoring across the two separately funded elements.

It is to note that project development activity with all contractors was paused with immediate effect, following the elections in May. Essential environmental monitoring activity only has continued. This is reflected in the 2025/6 year project financial returns as required by DfT.

The following activities (not exhaustive) have been undertaken by the listed principal contractors in support of the project.

- Balfour Beatty – Procured through the SCAPE Framework, Balfour Beatty have managed the provision of Ground Investigation and Piling works along the project alignment in order to assess water table depths, ground conditions and supporting geological information. This has been used to inform the initial and then detailed design of the road and its associated structures, including the proposed viaduct over the River Severn.
- WSP – As the Council key term contractor, WSP have provided all initial and detailed designs for the project, Environmental monitoring and baselining, the preparation of the Full Planning Application, Landowner and stakeholder engagement and consultation, support with Main Contractor procurement, preparation of the initial Outline Business Case and also the completion of the Full Business Case in line with DfTs requirements.
- Anthony Collins Solicitors (ACS) were commissioned through the Councils Legal Framework from project start in order to provide detailed legal support and advice around the project. The decision to appoint an external legal advisor satisfies the

requirement to keep the Councils own Legal team aligned with the Local Planning Authority only, therefore avoiding any conflict of interests. ACS have provided advice and support around Main Contractor Procurement, preparation of draft contractor contracts, the preparation of the Full Planning Application, oversight of the preparation of any Council Decision papers and the negotiation and legal form of required licenses, agreements and Section 106 documents involving third party land owners and stakeholders.

- Kier – As the Councils Term Maintenance Contractor, Kier have also been used to oversee the later phases of Ground Investigation and groundwater monitoring equipment installation along the projects proposed route.

| Spend on NWRR as at 10/02/2026 | | | Spend on OLR as at 10/02/2026 | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Total | | 32,153,493.29 | Total | | 6,831,960.65 |
| Breakdown: | | | Breakdown: | | |
| Supplier | Contract Type | Total Spend | Supplier | Contract Type | Total Spend |
| WSP | Term Engineering Consultant | 21,931,312.99 | WSP | Term Engineering Consultant | 3,487,435.58 |
| Balfour Beatty | Pre-Construction Contract | 4,650,899.83 | Balfour Beatty | Pre-Construction Contract | 450,600.17 |
| Kier | Pre-Construction Contract | 2,885,494.73 | Kier | Pre-Construction Contract | 8,394.93 |
| Anthony Collins Solicitors/Freeths | Legals | 705,668.13 | Anthony Collins Solicitors/Freeths | Legals | 1,500.00 |
| Various | Utility Works Contracts | 75,608.65 | Various | Utility Works Contracts | 2,021,691.10 |
| Network Rail | Asset Protection Agreements | 27,507.95 | Various | Costs for West View Acquisition | 618,877.15 |
| Shropshire Council | Internal project Support Costs | 863,256.22 | Shropshire Council | Internal project Support Costs | 126,205.65 |
| Various | Public Consultation Events | 58,744.72 | Various | Public Consultation Events | 201.00 |
| RPS Consulting | Ground Investigation & Piling Works | 442,560.52 | Ground Investigations & Piling Ltd | Ground Investigation & Piling Works | 93,987.20 |
| Ground Investigations & Piling Ltd | Ground Investigation & Piling Works | 129,745.45 | National Highways | Churncote Roundabout | 18,967.54 |
| Staffordshire County Council | Surface Testing | 7,553.00 | Environment Agency | | 594.00 |
| Birmingham University | | 3,200.00 | Shropshire Council | Planning Fees | 3,486.33 |
| Natural England | Licensing | 44,814.00 | | | |
| RSPB | Licensing | 5,280.50 | | | |
| Shropshire Council | Planning Fees | 54,509.80 | | | |
| Various | Land Agents & Compensation Payments for Land | 267,336.80 | | | |
| | | 32,153,493.29 | | | 6,831,960.65 |