

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 DfT's requirements.
- Anthony Collins Solicitors (ACS) were commissioned through the Council's 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 Council's 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 Council's 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		
Supplier	Contract Type	Total Spend	Supplier	Contract Type	Total Spend
Total		32,153,493.29	Total		6,831,960.65
Breakdown:			Breakdown:		
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	2,685,494.73	Kier	Pre-Construction Contract	8,394.83
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	18,987.54
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