

SHREWSBURY NORTH WEST RELIEF ROAD (NWRR)

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Summary

At the meeting of Council on the 14 December 2007, the Portfolio Holder Environment and Sustainability stated that a report on the latest position of the North West Relief Road would be brought to Cabinet in January 2008.

This report updates members on key aspects of the proposed Shrewsbury North West Relief Road (NWRR) and sets out how the scheme will be taken forward. It gives the latest estimates of the cost of the scheme, including the possible effects of inflation.

The report gives the current position with both the Regional Funding Allocation process and the work being undertaken by the Environment Agency to determine the viability and feasibility of an integrated NWRR flood risk management scheme.

Recommendations

- A. It is recommended that Cabinet agree to the development of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road as a priority within the Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011

REPORT

Background

1. The idea of constructing a new north-west relief road (NWRR) for Shrewsbury has been under consideration for at least 20 years. It is referred to in:
 - The County Structure Plan;
 - The Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Local Plan and the emerging Local Development Framework;
 - The Local Transport Plan for Shropshire;
 - The West Midlands Regional Transport Priorities.
2. A NWRR would reduce the amount of traffic which passes through Shrewsbury, reducing the build up of congestion and shortening journey times for both local and longer distance traffic. A very robust economic case can be made for the scheme. However, it should be noted that:
 - The scheme will require the approval and financial support of the government's Department for Transport, as well as the commitment of local funding.
 - It would have a significant impact upon the natural and built environment. The Council will need to demonstrate that full account has been taken of this, by submitting a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment.
 - It would require planning consent and may require the compulsory purchase of land. A statutory public inquiry is therefore likely to be required.
3. On 24 January 2007 Cabinet approved a preferred route for the NWRR and agreed to develop it in more detail.
4. On 20 July 2007, a report to Council advised that the Environment Agency were interested in the idea of combining a NWRR with a flood alleviation scheme. The report also advised that, whilst the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) remained the most likely way of attracting government funding, the NWRR should still be put forward as a candidate for Regional Funding Allocation (RFA). Council agreed to complete the TIF study, but with reservations about the acceptability of a toll on a NWRR and road pricing generally.
5. On 14 December 2007 Council resolved to approve revisions to the preferred route of the NWRR and that bids for RFA funding should be progressed further, including consideration of setting the NWRR within a broader package of measures to reduce congestion and encourage use of more sustainable forms of transport, excluding road charging.

6. This report provides updates on key aspects of the NWRR, and sets out how the scheme will be taken forward. It covers:
 - i. The preferred route
 - ii. Integrated flood risk management scheme
 - iii. Environmental impact
 - iv. Traffic impact
 - v. Economic performance
 - vi. Complementary transport measures
 - vii. Relationship to New Growth Point and Local Development Framework
 - viii. Public and stakeholder consultation
 - ix. Regional Funding Allocation
 - x. Scheme costs
 - xi. Timetable and programme
 - xii. Risk assessment

The preferred route

7. The NWRR would be a single carriageway road between the A5/A458 Churncote roundabout and the A528 Ellesmere Road / Battlefield Link Road roundabout.
8. A single preferred route for this road was approved by Cabinet on the 24 January 2007 and the report advised that further minor modifications may be needed as a result of this more detailed work.
9. The preferred route was accepted as an amendment to the Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Local Plan.
10. Surveys and design investigations continued throughout 2007 and a revised alignment (Drawing No. 755633-P-PM-036) was reported to Cabinet on 12 December 2007 and approved by Council on 14 December 2007 as the preferred route for the NWRR.
11. A small amount of work remains to be completed to bring this element of the project to a conclusion, in anticipation of the longer timescale for delivery now envisaged. This includes:
 - Finishing off the topographical and drainage surveys
 - Finalising the factual and interpretative reports on drainage, structures, ground investigation and hydrology, following completion of surveys.
 - Finalising junction designs, following completion of surveys.

- Continuing discussion with the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water

Integrated flood risk management scheme

12. As reported to Council on 14 December 2007, the Environment Agency (EA) is undertaking a “pre-feasibility” study to determine whether it would be possible to deliver an integrated flood risk management scheme as part of a North West Relief Road, by substituting an embankment and river control system for the proposed River Severn viaduct.
13. The EA’s pre-feasibility study will consider the costs and impacts of a combined scheme and will reassess its economic and other benefits against the EA’s funding criteria, which are currently being revised. The results of this work will be known in April 2008. The EA will then need to decide whether or not to put a scheme forward for funding.
14. If, in April 2008, the EA study shows that a combined scheme is not economically viable, we could continue to develop the NWRR as a stand alone scheme with a viaduct, as in the preliminary design. If, however, the EA decides to go forward with a combined scheme, this would affect the programme, design and cost of the NWRR.
15. With regard to programme, the EA would need to secure approval at a regional level prior to submitting a bid to DEFRA. The County Council would need to agree to pursue a combined scheme. Then a full feasibility study would need to be undertaken by the EA. This would take at least 18 months, possibly longer, and include detailed environmental surveys over a larger area than those done recently for the NWRR.
16. A combined scheme would not just affect the river Severn crossing. Because of the need to balance over the earthworks over the length of a new road, deeper cuttings would be needed on the other sections of the NWRR to provide material for the dam. This would require some re-working of the preliminary design including drainage and landscaping.
17. It is not yet known whether these changes to the NWRR design would result in a net cost increase or saving, nor do we know how the costs of a combined scheme would need to be shared.
18. We need to provide advice and information to the EA over the coming months as they do their pre-feasibility study, but there is little more we can do until we know whether the combined scheme is considered viable and, if so, how the EA choose to progress it.
19. If the flood risk management scheme cannot be provided as part of the NWRR it seems unlikely that it could be provided at all in the foreseeable future. A flood control structure could not be added retrospectively to a NWRR viaduct.

Environmental impact

20. A Stage 2 Environmental Assessment was undertaken in 2004. A report was published in May 2005 and the findings were incorporated into the NWRR Preferred Route report in October 2006. Reports to Cabinet on 7 February 2006 and 24 January 2007 summarised the main environmental impacts of the alternative routes then under consideration. The current preferred route is derived from the modified Black Route referred to in the January 2007 report.
21. Throughout 2007, detailed field surveys have been undertaken in the area of the preferred route in order to provide information for the full Environmental Statement. These have included habitat surveys and baseline surveys of great crested newts, badgers, bats, water voles, reptiles and invertebrates, as well as archaeological investigations of the Berwick Crop Mark Complex. Monitoring has been undertaken of ground water quality, and preliminary ground investigation surveys have also been undertaken. Design work has been undertaken on landscaping and environmental mitigation measures, and on routes for non-motorised road users.
22. Reports will be prepared on the various environmental surveys and studies that have been undertaken during 2007. However, it is not appropriate to prepare the full Environmental Statement until we have a clearer idea of the prospects for an integrated flood risk management scheme, being considered by the Environment Agency.

Traffic impact

23. As part of the TIF study, traffic forecasts were produced for peak and off-peak traffic flows in 2012 and 2027. These represented the possible opening date for the NWRR (2012) and a “design year” 15 years after opening (2027).
24. A more likely opening year for the NWRR, within the Regional Funding Allocation process, would now be 2016. The traffic forecasts will therefore need to be updated to 2016 and 2031 to reflect this. More detail will be given in future reports.
25. Overall the traffic forecasts confirm that a NWRR should lead to big reductions in traffic on those roads which presently form the north-west corridor through Shrewsbury. The impact on other roads within the river loop would be far smaller. It would however reduce traffic on the A5/A49 bypass, where congestion is at times becoming a problem and on the roads which function as an inner ring road for Shrewsbury.
26. The NWRR is forecast to lead to a 1.1% increase in casualties with a higher proportion of killed or seriously injured. This is partly because we have to assume a “default” accident rate based on the national average for this type of road, whereas for existing roads we use locally observed accident rates, which are lower. It does not represent any specific safety features or hazards on the NWRR.

27. This will be examined in more detail when the traffic forecasts have been updated. At present they do not take account of the potential safety benefits of the complementary measures which might be introduced on existing roads to “lock in” the benefits of a NWRR. Nor do they take account of the strong downward trend in the number of people killed and seriously injured in Shropshire in recent years.

Economic performance

28. In the 2005 the gross benefit-cost ratio (BCR) for the “Black Route” on which the preferred route is based was calculated at 4.7. This was updated to 4.5 for the Round 1 RFA bid.
29. The economic calculations for the NWRR were updated as part of the recent TIF study. The results, based on the presumption that the NWRR would open in 2012, were:

	BCR
Gross (including effect of indirect taxes)	5.2
Net (excluding effect of indirect taxes)	8.7

30. Because of the way DfT require us to take account of taxation and cash revenues, both gross and net values of BCR were calculated for the TIF study. For highway assessments, gross BCR is normally used. The gross BCR of 5.2 compares very favourably with the known values for other potential transport schemes in the West Midlands. Whilst this is not the only consideration, it is important.
31. Given that a likely opening date for the NWRR delivered through the RFA process would be 2016, the economic benefits need to be recalculated for this date. It should be noted that a later start date often gives a better (i.e. higher) BCR, since forecast traffic levels will be higher.

Complementary transport measures

32. The DfT guidance on Local Transport Plans (January 2006) states that: “Local transport authorities should also consider how demand management measures could help to deliver the most effective outcomes from major infrastructure projects. Packages of complementary measures have been shown to 'lock in' the benefits of new investment, ensuring it continues to deliver the best possible value for money long after initial implementation. The Department therefore intends in future to consider evidence about authorities' plans for demand management measures when considering major scheme bids.”
33. The above guidance is reflected in the Council resolution of 14 December 2007:
- “that bids for Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) funding for the North West Relief Road be progressed, including consideration of setting the scheme within a broader package of measures to reduce congestion and

encourage use of more sustainable forms of transport, excluding road pricing”.

34. We need to determine which complementary measures, if any, could be accepted as part of the NWRR scheme for the purposes of RFA funding, and amend our RFA bid accordingly.
35. The preliminary findings of a review of means of reducing congestion and encouraging a transfer to more sustainable forms of transport were reported to Council on 14 December 2007. This work will be taken forward as part of the current Local Transport Plan (LTP) process with a view to developing a Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Strategy for inclusion in the subsequent LTP. Proposals for how this will be taken forward will be included in the LTP programme report which will be brought to Cabinet in March 2008.

Relationship to New Growth Point and Local Development Framework

36. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) identifies Shrewsbury as a sub-regional focus for housing development and a strategic centre for commercial development. The New Growth Point (NGP) and emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy reflect this by envisaging housing growth significantly higher than that anticipated in the 2004 Regional Planning Guidance.
37. The new traffic model will now be used to assess the traffic and transport implications of potential development associated with the New Growth Point, including specific sites identified in the Housing Land Allocation, both with and without a NWRR.

Public and stakeholder consultation

38. Although not a statutory requirement, we believe it may be helpful to have a further round of public and stakeholder consultation prior to deciding whether or not to submit a major scheme business case, or planning application, for the NWRR, in order to:
 - determine the overall level of support for a NWRR
 - show people the preferred route of the NWRR and receive comments on it
 - explain what complementary transport measures are being considered and what they could achieve
39. Whilst the preferred route has now been developed in some detail, people also need to know the potential for a flood risk management scheme and what complementary measures could be provided to “lock in” the benefits of a new road before deciding whether or not to support a NWRR.
40. Work on both the flood risk management scheme and on developing and testing complementary measures will continue during 2008/09. For these

reasons, it is recommended that the next round of public and stakeholder consultation on the NWRR should be planned for June/July 2009.

Regional Funding Allocation

41. The main source of funding for the NWRR will be the Department for Transport (DfT), through the Regional Funding Allocation (RFA). This process is set out below:
 - The DfT advises the Regional Assembly what funding is available for major transport schemes over a period of years.
 - The Regional Assembly assesses and prioritises potential schemes and prepares a capital programme (the RFA programme), which is submitted as advice to the DfT.
 - The DfT then takes the RFA programme into consideration when considering a business case (bid) from a local transport authorities for major scheme funding. However, it is DfT who make the final decisions and grants “programme entry” to approved schemes.
 - The Regional Assembly monitors progress on scheme delivery.
42. The DfT have allocated a total of £979 million to the West Midlands over the period 2006/07 to 2015/16. Round 1 of the regional assessment process was undertaken in 2005, and a proposed programme of 42 schemes was submitted as advice to the DfT in January 2006. A further 30 schemes were assessed but not included in the advice.
43. Shrewsbury NWRR was one of six “provisional priorities” included in the RFA programme of 42 schemes. It was also one of three schemes flagged in the programme as “TIF bids”. In accepting the Region’s advice, DfT advised that funding for the NWRR should be considered as part of the TIF.
44. Monitoring of projected RFA spending has shown that the programme, though currently underspending, would have a net overspend until the period 2014-2016, when there would be some “headroom”.
45. Following the decision of Council in December 2007, the Regional Assembly were immediately advised that the Council intended to seek RFA funding for the NWRR. As a result the scheme (with a 2014-2016 construction period) has been identified in the RFA programme as reported to the Regional Transport Partnership on 7 January 2008, although it must be noted that the NWRR is still only a “provisional priority”.
46. The second round of regional assessment has now started and a further 40 potential schemes have been put forward by local transport authorities and the Highways Agency for consideration. The gross value of these

schemes, together with the provisional priorities from round one, is believed to be about £3 billion, including £2 billion of public transport schemes. These costs are far in excess of the available RFA funds. A “refresh” process is being undertaken to assess the new schemes together with the 6 provisional priorities (including the NWRR) already identified. This will determine which schemes should be firm priorities for the remaining Round 1 RFA, and anticipates the DfT’s request for advice on Round 2 (now expected in Summer 2008). It is anticipated that a progress report will be made to the Regional Transport Partnership in late March 2008.

47. It is not possible to determine whether the NWRR will emerge as a firm priority in the assessment for the RFA refresh. There is intense competition for limited funds. However the NWRR does have the advantage of being a provisional priority, and many of the “new” schemes are ones which were rejected in the initial assessment. The scheme also has a high benefit-cost ratio (BCR), as discussed earlier in this report, and – as a result of the work done in 2007 – is in an advanced state of preparation. We should have a clearer idea in late March or April 2008 and, hopefully, a firm decision on RFA status before the end of 2008/09.
48. DfT have indicated that we should await prioritisation in the RFA before submitting a formal business case.
49. At the Regional Transport Partnership on 7 January 2008 it was suggested that a NWRR should be set in the context of a broader transport strategy for Shrewsbury. This is a priority area of work, and may result in a revised RFA bid.
50. It will not be possible to incorporate the results of the EA pre-feasibility study into the current RFA work, but this may be an issue later in the process.

Scheme Costs

51. An updated cost estimate for the NWRR has been prepared based on the revised preferred route, as approved by Council on 14 December 2007.
52. The current estimated basic cost of the NWRR, at a Q2 2007 price base, is:

Highways works and utilities	44,374,000	Includes risk at 95% confidence level
Land	8,700,000	
Detailed design	2,847,172	
Site supervision	1,016,847	
Total basic cost	56,938,019	
Optimism bias	8,874,800	20% of highways works and utilities
Total basic cost with optimism bias	65,812,819	

53. The above costs are unlikely to be incurred until the scheme is fully committed and all financial and statutory approvals are in place.

54. There will also be further in-house and consultant costs associated with the advance development and preparation of the scheme, including the costs of a public inquiry, and these are likely to be incurred over the period 2008/09 – 2016/17, depending on the scheme programme. Again at a Q2 2007 price base, these costs, from 2008/09 onwards are estimated at £3,497,924 without optimism bias and £3,696,924 with optimism bias.
55. The forecast effect of inflation would be to increase the estimated total cost of developing and constructing the NWRR by £22,956,605 including optimism bias or £19,655,826 excluding optimism bias.
56. Therefore, assuming a start of works in 2014 a summary of the estimated NWRR costs from 2008/09 onwards are:

	Current prices (Q2 2007)			With inflation
	Basic scheme	Scheme preparation	Total	Total
Without optimism bias	56,938,019	3,497,924	60,435,943	80,091,769
With optimism bias	65,812,819	3,696,924	69,509,743	92,466,348

57. Clearly some of these costs will have to be incurred before we get the financial and statutory approvals that mean the scheme is definitely able to go ahead. If we assume that we will have firm decisions on government financial support and the outcome of the planning inquiry prior to 2013/14, this means that the County Council would have to spend just over £2 million on scheme development over the next five years before there can be absolute certainty about whether or not the NWRR can go ahead.
58. A provisional budget of £350,000 has been allocated in the 2008/09 capital programme for NWRR scheme development. This will be used for work on:
- Updating traffic and economic forecasts to new opening/design year.
 - Starting to prepare an Environmental Statement (based on 2007/08 surveys).
 - Investigation of a NWRR scheme to incorporate Environment Agency flood control structure.
 - Preparation for public consultation.
 - Further development of hydrogeological, hydrological and geotechnical design.
 - Ongoing collection of data to support future planning application.
 - Starting to prepare a Major Scheme Business Case.

59. The DfT no longer provides 100% of the cost of major schemes, either as grant or as credit approval. Scheme promoters now have to find:
- 10% of land, works and supervision costs
 - 50% of detailed design costs
 - 100% of advance scheme costs, including costs of public inquiry
60. The Regional Assessment guidelines allow scheme promoters to bid for the DfT share of scheme costs only but at projected out-turn prices (i.e. including inflation). The assumed cost for RFA purposes is therefore now just over £92 million (inclusive of optimism bias)
61. On this basis, and taking account of the latest advice from Regional Assembly officers, Shropshire is presently able to bid for RFA totalling £78,527,479, including optimism bias, as shown below:

Financial Year	Total Scheme Cost	DfT Funding (RFA)	SCC Contribution
2008/09	£350,000	£0	£350,000
2009/10	£350,000	£0	£350,000
2010/11	£606,907	£0	£606,907
2011/12	£600,725	£0	£600,725
2012/13	£491,270	£142,811	£348,459
2013/14	£1,696,402	£777,801	£918,601
2014/15	£39,385,731	£34,042,686	£5,343,045
2015/16	£43,443,531	£38,713,842	£4,729,689
2016/17	£5,541,782	£4,850,339	£691,443
Total	£92,466,348	£78,527,479	£13,938,869

62. This implies local contributions totalling up to £13.9 million, including all scheme preparation costs from 2008/09 onwards at out-turn prices, including the effect of optimism bias. (This figure had previously been estimated at £8.4 million at 2007 prices).
63. The simplest way to view the local contributions is to consider them as:

- A cost for scheme preparation of around £3.6m from LTP capital budgets over the next nine years.
 - A contribution of up to £10.3 million to the detailed design and construction of the NWRR, during the period 2014 – 2016
64. One way in which the Council could address this is through capital receipts, supported through the sale of land which may be enabled to come forward through the planning system, as a result of a firm commitment to construct the NWRR.
65. As the scheme design is refined, the optimism bias will be progressively replaced by firmer estimates which would be included in future RFA and business case submissions. Cost estimates and the RFA position will be kept under review and any significant changes will be reported.

Timetable and programme

66. The programme of work to develop the NWRR depends upon the outcomes of the EA pre-feasibility study and RFA Regional Assessment.
67. An indicative programme to prepare the scheme for construction to start in 2014 is set out in Appendix A. At key stages there will be an opportunity for the Cabinet to review the scheme in the light of new information and decide whether to continue developing the scheme.

Risk assessment

68. There is clearly a risk that the County Council may incur significant expenditure, yet fail to deliver the NWRR. The principal external risks are:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Expenditure incurred (approx.) from April 2008
NWRR does not achieve firm priority status in RFA regional assessment	Medium. NWRR has a good economic rate of return but there is stiff competition from other schemes.	Without a firm priority in the regional assessment, it would not be possible to deliver NWRR on the timescale envisaged	£150,000
NWRR achieves firm priority in regional assessment but advice is not accepted by DfT	Low – DfT is likely to accept regional advice provided it is within overall RFA funding guidelines	Without DfT acceptance at this stage there would be little point submitting a business case	£350,000
Flood risk scheme is found	Medium to high. Earlier work could	Depends on timing. If at an early stage it	Minimal if decided

not to be viable or fails to attract financial approval	not show an adequate economic rate of return	would simplify NWRR work. If later, would delay NWRR business case. In either case, potentially loses support for NWRR	after pre-feasibility, but £880,000 if after full feasibility study
DfT does not approve the major scheme business case	Low, unless DfT consider it does not fully meet their objectives	Need to re-submit business case or abandon scheme	£1,260,000
Inspector rules against planning consent after Public Inquiry	Medium, as there is likely to be strong opposition to the scheme from environmental groups	If scheme could not be modified to resolve objections, it could not go forward.	£2,200,000
Cost increases beyond anticipated level of inflation	Medium – in recent years construction price inflation has been very high	A further big cost increase would threaten viability of the NWRR	N/A

Summary and conclusions

69. A North West Relief Road would bring significant traffic benefits to the County town. It would reduce traffic levels on the existing north – west corridor and on other routes within Shrewsbury, resulting in less noise and better air quality in these areas. It would enable the town’s highway network to cope better with the effects of planned growth, and would reduce pressure on the existing bypass. As a result it is possible to demonstrate a high economic rate of return.
70. A NWRR would have a significant impact on the local environment through which it passes. Whilst it is possible to mitigate much of this impact through sensitive design, it is accepted that some people and groups will remain opposed to the scheme. It would improve the environment of the built-up area.
71. A NWRR can only proceed if we can secure financial support from the government; this means that the scheme needs to be approved at Regional level as a priority for Regional Funding Allocation (RFA). The NWRR is currently a “provisional priority” for possible funding in the period 2014 – 2016, and will be considered further in the planned “refresh” of the RFA Regional Assessment in 2008.
72. There are a number of identified risks which could make it more difficult or impossible to deliver the scheme. At each stage of development these will need to be reassessed before further expenditure is committed.

73. A combined NWRR and flood risk management scheme could provide benefits to a large area of Shropshire and beyond, and the proposed programme allows time for this to be investigated in detail by the Environment Agency, and for the Council to respond to the findings.
74. It is proposed that development work should continue in all these areas during 2008/09, leading up to a major consultation exercise in 2009.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Local Plan, Written Statement adopted June 2001
NWRR non-car options report (Mouchel Parkman, September 2002)
Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Structure Plan 1996-2011 adopted 14 Nov 2002
NWRR non-road study report (Mouchel Parkman, December 2004)
NWRR Stage 2 Environmental Assessment Report (Mouchel Parkman, May 2005)
NWRR public consultation report (No. 1051/14/6) (Mouchel Parkman, 2005)
DfT Guidance on Local Transport Plans (January 2006)
Cabinet report 7 Feb 2006 Shrewsbury NWRR
Local Transport Plan for Shropshire (March 2006)
NWRR preferred route report (Mouchel Parkman, October 2006)
Eddington Transport Study (advice to Government, December 2006)
Cabinet report 24 January 2007
Council report 20 July 2007
DfT Guidance for Local Authorities seeking Government funding for major transport schemes (August 2007)
West Midlands Regional Transport Priorities (November 2007)
Shrewsbury Transport Innovation Fund Study, Final Report, December 2007
Cabinet Report 12 December 2007, and Council report 14 December 2007 (TIF)
Revised NWRR preferred route (Drawing 755633-P-PM-036) December 2007
Reports to WM Regional Transport Partnership on RFA (7 January 2008)

Human Rights Act Appraisal

In progressing the project it is acknowledged that there may be instances where consideration will need to be given to striking a balance between the interests of the public generally and the possible interference with private/personal rights. There are however statutory powers that exist in this regard and there will be an assessment of whether it is reasonable and proportionate to use those statutory powers as and when those instances arise.

Environmental Appraisal

The development of the NWRR scheme to date has involved an environmental assessment using the Government guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11 Environmental Assessment, Stage 2. Stage 2 is designed to assess alternative route options. Additional assessments were undertaken in order to recommend a single preferred route. Survey work for a more detailed assessment has been undertaken as part of the development of a preferred route.

Risk Management Appraisal

As the development of the line of the proposed NWRR progresses there is the possibility that landowners may claim that their land has been blighted. In circumstances where land is deemed to be blighted then landowners, if certain statutory criteria have been satisfied, may serve purchase notices on the relevant authority. If such a purchase notice is served then each case will need to be dealt with on its own facts and merits.

There can be no guarantee at this stage that the Department for Transport will agree to fund the construction of the NWRR. The scheme is likely to be the subject of a public inquiry the outcome of which cannot be predicted. Risk Assessment is covered in the main report.

The cost estimates for the NWRR include an element for risk at a 95% level and a 20% optimism bias where appropriate.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

A major public consultation exercise on the NWRR was undertaken in May and June 2005, and the results were summarised in the February 2006 Cabinet report. Preliminary consultation was undertaken in December 2006 on wider transport issues, including NWRR, as part of the TIF project. It is suggested that public and stakeholder consultation should take place in June/July 2009

Cabinet Member

John Everall

Local Member

All members with Shrewsbury electoral divisions
Mr John Roberts (Loton), Mr John Everall (Tern)

Appendices

A – Indicative Programme

APPENDIX A – Indicative Programme

Jan – March 2008	Complete outstanding work from 2007	Work to the end of March 2008 will be funded from the currently approved budget for 2007/08.
	Liaise with EA on pre-feasibility study	
	Preliminary investigation of complementary measures for possible inclusion in RFA bid	
April – June 2008	Results of EA pre-feasibility study known	Report to Cabinet <i>If integrated flood scheme not viable, re-orient preparation towards a “stand-alone” scheme</i>
	Progress report to Regional Transport Partnership on RFA Regional Assessment by Spring 2008	Report to Cabinet on prospects for RFA funding
	Continue to develop complementary transport strategy	
	Continue to develop NWRR scheme, (working closely with EA if combined scheme found to be viable).	
July 08 – March 2009	Further progress on RFA prioritisation by mid-2008. DfT expected to request formal advice in Summer 2008, giving 6 months for the Region’s response (by end 2008?)	Report to Cabinet. <i>If NWRR does not achieve firm priority in RFA process consider whether or not to take the scheme further</i>
	EA commence full feasibility study (up to 2 years)?	
	Continue to develop NWRR scheme (working closely with EA if combined scheme found to be viable).	
	Continue to develop complementary transport strategy	Report to Cabinet on complementary transport strategy
April – June 2009	Prepare for public and stakeholder consultation (working closely with EA if combined scheme found to be viable).	Report to Cabinet on proposed consultation
June/July 2009	Public and stakeholder consultation	
July – September 2009	Consider results of consultation	Report to Cabinet.

Beyond the end of 2009, the timetable would depend upon whether the NWRR was still being progressed as a potential joint project with the EA. A tentative long term programme for a combined scheme is:

EA complete full feasibility study	September 2010
Submit major scheme business case to DfT	December 2010
DfT financial approval (programme entry)	June 2011
Planning application	
Public Inquiry	March 2012
Inspector's decision (full planning approval)	March 2013
Commence detailed design	June 2013
Start construction (3 years)	June 2014
Scheme opens	June 2017

The above programme shows – in broad terms – how the scheme could develop through a series of decisions, with an increasing level of financial commitment prior to the final decision to commence detailed design and construction of the scheme.

If a combined NWRR and flood risk management scheme is found not to be viable, the long term programme would depend upon whether this is known as a result of the pre-feasibility study or later, as a result of the full feasibility study. With a stand-alone scheme it may be possible to bring forward some of the work, allowing construction to start in April 2014 or sooner. The construction period for a stand-alone scheme would only be two years, allowing possible completion by April 2016.