

Don't forget the £52M Oxon Link Road

The council switches between talking about the whole scheme and the proportion excluding the Oxon Link Road as suits its arguments. Often it is not clear which is being talked about as they are both called the NWRR. The draft Full Business Case is for the NWRR excluding the Oxon Link Road. It's not clear what kind of business case the council is going to present for the Oxon Link Road but the document they produced for the Marches LEP in late 2023 was abysmal. They claimed that the OLR had a High Benefit:Cost Ratio of 3.3. This was based on an estimated cost of the road at that point of £17.91M (an increase of 39% from the original £12.9M price).

We wrote to the Marches LEP board to say that that estimated cost was misleading as the North West Relief Road project team was already aware that the total cost of the scheme had doubled (having alerted the Dept for Transport of this in summer 2022). We suggested that a price of £26M was likely to be conservative.

Shropshire Council has now released the costs for the NWRR (and OLR) resulting from last year's tender exercise which suggests that the cost of the OLR is now £52M <https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/NWRR-cost-table.pdf> Given that work on the project will not now start in spring 2025 (the basis of the quoted costs), further indexation of this cost will apply.