

COUNTY COUNCIL

19 SEPTEMBER 2018

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

QUESTION FROM MR T CLARK

Since early this year, extensive ground investigations have been underway along the route of a proposed northern relief road for Durham City. What is the cost or projected cost of this work and, secondly, what was the cost of such work a few years ago for a projected western relief road?

RESPONSE

Firstly, I would like to thank Mr Clark for the question.

We are currently completing a significant exercise to test the ground conditions along the length of the proposed Durham Northern Relief Road. This work is essential if we want to bid for national funding to deliver this critical element of infrastructure. The works will see the sinking of over 70 trial holes and boreholes, some up to 90 meters deep, as well as monitoring over a 3 month period. Although the works are not fully complete it is expected that the final cost of the work will be £343,000.

A similar exercise undertaken previously along the length of the Western Relief Road previously cost £273,000.

The Draft Durham City Sustainable Transport Plan is clear that the long term transport strategy for the city centre is dependent on the ability to provide more space for people travelling on foot, by bike and bus. This is impossible to achieve without a new crossing of the River Wear which provides an alternative to Milburngate Bridge. It is this additional crossing that is provided by the Northern Relief Road.

Providing the Relief Road not only allows extra space in the City for pedestrians, cyclists, bus users it will also create significant air quality benefits by removing unnecessary slow moving and standing traffic and allow the City to function as the economy grows.

Displacing non-essential car trips away from the city centre will also encourage residents and visitors to use active travel and public transport when travelling into the city at peak hours, rather than taking the car into the city.

The Northern Relief Road is a longstanding proposal to improve the road network around Durham City. The principle was established by the Inspector of the 1979 County Durham Structure Plan which stated that a Northern link road 'will improve the link between Consett and the A1 (M) at Carrville and

together with a Western Relief Road, reduce traffic congestion through the city centre. The road was also safeguarded in the City of Durham Local Plan 2004 and had been incorporated in the latest consultation on the Durham Plan.

The improvements resulting from the provision of a Northern Relief Road will have major benefits for the cultural and historic environment of the city, making it a much more pleasant place to work, shop and visit and having direct benefits to the built fabric and public realm of the city including the World Heritage Site and safeguarding the City as a premier economic asset.