

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

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Next step in developing case for Whittlesey relief road

Long-term plans to tackle transport issues and boost economic growth in Whittlesey have taken a step forward as work begins on evidencing the need for a Whittlesey Southern Relief Road.

Following the establishment of a Whittlesey Relief Road project board earlier this year, consultants Mott MacDonald have been appointed to lead the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for a relief road.

A 2020 inception study on the project outlined its benefits as facilitating future commercial growth, increasing capacity for new housing, improving journey reliability and reducing congestion, as well as improving air quality and road safety conditions.

Now the SOBC will examine a range of transport solutions to assess and determine whether the relief road is the best option to push forward – and demonstrate the need for government funding to make it happen.

Cllr Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council's portfolio holder for transport and project board member, said: "I'm pleased that the next step in the relief road project is getting underway for the residents of Whittlesey who have waited many years for this.

"We know problems with traffic flow and congestion are a frustration to many and a hurdle to the future prosperity of the town, but we're determined to develop a robust case for the most appropriate solution."

The consultants will now work with elected representatives and officers from Fenland District Council, Whittlesey Town Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to draw up the SOBC.

The work will identify the key transport issues faced in Whittlesey, examine why they need to be addressed and identify and explore options to resolve them.

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement will form part of the project. It is intended that the business case will be completed by November next year (2024).

The CPCA has agreed to fund the development of the SOBC as part of the ongoing [Growing Fenland](#) project of economic masterplans for the district. The £260k comes from the Combined Authority's Market Towns Programme.

The initial relief road inception study, commissioned by Whittlesey Town Council in 2020, had concluded there was sufficient evidence to proceed to the SOBC stage.

Cllr Chris Boden, Leader of Fenland District Council and project board member, said: "Large infrastructure projects such as this are very cumbersome to initiate, and the process is long.

The first stage was satisfactorily achieved by Whittlesey Town Council who managed to obtain a report which was positive and led to the justification of the strategic outline business case, but there are many more stages to overcome.

“By the time a relief road would be constructed, the need in Whittlesey will be so obvious which is why steps are being taken now in order to prepare.”

Deputy Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, Cllr Anna Smith, said: “The Combined Authority is committed to helping local areas develop the solutions that work best for them and our Growing Fenland and Market Towns Programme reflects that - a programme which is designed to make sure that our towns, so often overlooked in the past, get the support they deserve.

“One of the main benefits of devolution is ensuring that decisions are made closer to the residents affected by them. I am therefore delighted that our funding will help Whittlesey residents to make an evidence-based decision about the right transport solution for their needs, building community and helping build prosperity.”

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