

Work continues on multi-million pound Southern Link Road improvements

Work continues to gather pace on the multi-million pound A4440 Worcester Southern Link Road improvement scheme.

With an investment of over £40m to dual between Ketch and Whittington roundabouts, the programme is one of the biggest upgrades to road infrastructure in the County for many years. The scheme has been identified as one of the highest priorities in terms of tackling both current and future levels of congestion, which is a significant barrier to economic growth.

Work to improve Norton Roundabout is progressing well. Contractors have now been given the go-ahead to begin dual-tracking the section of road between Norton and Whittington roundabouts, as well as completing the dualling between Norton Roundabout and the Ketch.

This phase of work will include the creation of a dedicated left-hand turn from Whittington Road (from Junction 7 of the M5) and the removal of the current "give way" arrangement. Work to complete the entire dualling, including the installation of new railway and bridleway bridges, is due to commence in summer 2017 with a spring 2019 completion.

The benefits of delivering the scheme include:

- Improving transport links and infrastructure, which will boost the local economy.
- Contributing towards reducing traffic congestion in the city centre, residential areas and on the Southern Link Road.
- Reducing journey times.
- Improving journey time reliability.

Funding for the improvements comes from a number of sources, including £16.4 million from the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership as part of the Government's Growth Deal and £16.3million provisionally allocated from the South Worcestershire Urban Extension development programme.

Cllr Ken Pollock, Cabinet Member for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure, said:

"Schemes such as this are a crucial part of our Open for Business strategy. This next key milestone takes us a step closer to dualling one of the most important strategic transport routes in the county. By improving transport links and infrastructure, motorists will benefit from reduced congestion and travel times. This will also have a positive impact on boosting the local economy."

Gary Woodman, Chief Executive of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise

Partnership, said: "The Southern Link Road improvements are vital to the economic growth of our County and will support our local businesses to increase productivity, due to improved journey times, as well as provide benefits for visitors and residents. The improved links to the motorway network will also provide greater access to employment sites in South Worcestershire which will enable other companies to locate in the County and bring further jobs. We recognise that the full benefits will only be seen when funding is secured for the final stage, which is the dualling of the Carrington Bridge. We continue to work with all partner organisations to raise the profile of the need for funding for this significant final phase."

