

Key dates in the Oxon Link Road LGF Project

The Oxon Link Road (OLR) project was awarded £4.2m of Local Growth Funds in 2015 as part of a £12.9m project for the construction of a new single carriageway link road between Churncote Roundabout and the B4380, with associated infrastructure, including the inclusion of two at-grade junctions along the new single carriageway link road and a new roundabout on the B4380 to accommodate the OLR.

Date	Activity	Description
8th July 14 or 1st December 15	Contract started	The original commencement date of the 1 st December 2015 was revised to the 8 th July 2014 on the 14 th April 2016, to take into account expenditure that had happened before this date. The contract had the following deadlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10th March 2015: expenditure starts ○ 1st July 2019: spades in the ground ○ 14th September 2020: road opens ○ 16th November 2020: construction completed ○ 30th November 2020: project completion ○ 30th November 2021: the final claim ○ Outputs: 750 housing units, 2,800 jobs, there were no other outputs described
21st May 19	Board Meeting	The Board approved the reprofiling of OLR, housing units were increased from 750 to 835, and jobs decreased from 2,800 to 1,090. The following outputs were added: 1.14km of new road, 12 hectares of employment land, 2.05km road resurfaced and 4.26km of new cycleway. The new road was forecast to be delivered by 2020/21
12th June 19	Monitoring Visit	OLR Project Team stated that Shropshire Council was considering merging the OLR with the NWRR
24th Sept 19	Board Meeting	The Board discussed the risks associated with the OLR, these included the absence of 19/20 claim forms, no correspondence being received on the proposed merger or confirmation on how this could affect the 20/21 allocation of £785,705. A deadline of the 31 st October was given for Shropshire Council to provide more detail on their plans of OLR. Shropshire Council was unable to provide the information needed to complete the approved Funding Agreement Variation by the agreed date
7th Nov 19	Emergency Board Meeting	a decision was taken to approve the proposal from Shropshire Council for the merger of the existing OLR scheme with the NWRR. Combining the projects would de-risk the planning for the OLR and aid the progress of the NWRR through planning. The implications for combining the projects would be a 2-year delay in project delivery for the OLR to 2023. Combining the projects would necessitate the removal of a major roundabout and changes in infrastructure as the road would be a 60mph single carriageway road. Additional information was requested by the Board on outputs and finances.
7th Nov 19	Deed of variation	The end date of the project from changed from the 30 th November 2020 to 31 st March 2032. This document was submitted for signature but has not been signed or dated, and is appended to the original contract with the commencement date of the 1 st December 2015, this was then changed to the 8 th July 2014. Within the outputs the 1.14km of new road was forecast to be delivered in 2020/21.
26 th Nov 19	Board Meeting	It was agreed that additional detail would be required from Shropshire Council on certain financial and output data relating to the OLR by Friday 6 th December 2019
16 th Dec 19	SC Cabinet	Shropshire Council considered the OLR merger with the NWRR at its Cabinet meeting. The proposal was supported and agreed by Members in line with LEP requirements

27 th Jan 20	Board Meeting	The Board received the outstanding financial and output information that was requested at the emergency Board meeting on the 7 th November 2019. Electronic confirmation was received that the output profile and figures approved by the LEP Board (21 May 2019) were still relevant to the proposed OLR/SNWRR merged project
27 th Feb 20	SC Full Council	Although Shropshire Council agreed the linking of the road schemes on the 16 th December 2019 meeting. Given the timescales involved in preparing and circulating papers in advance of Full Council meetings, the Cabinet decision was reported through to Full Council on 27 th February
21 st May 21	Board Report	An updated LEP Board report confirmed the proposed merger put forward by Shropshire Council relating to the OLR & NWRR was no longer required. An updated delivery position would be used to vary the OLR Funding Agreement
19 th Aug 21	PRMC Meeting	PRMC highlighted the linked road projects as a new risk (3.20) It had been formally agreed (set out in monitoring visits) that the Project Officer would provide the LEP with the latest updates to the Board on the approach being taken to deliver the OLR and its links to the NWRR, including revised milestones. The LEP had attempted to obtain the requested information, which had not been provided. Because of these risks the PRMC invited the project to the 28 October 2021 PRMC meeting to give an update on the project and agree a way forward in varying the Funding Agreement. The OLR has remained a high-risk project since August 2021, a total of 24 months
28 th Oct 21	PRMC Meeting	OLR team reported that work was due to start on the OLR in October 2022, with completion expected in December 2024. The OLR project was carrying out significant risk mitigation on cost inflation and was confident outputs would be achieved. A Decision was due by February 2022 as to whether Shropshire Council would underwrite the project but there did not appear to be any appetite from Cabinet to cancel the project. The project continued to be highlighted as a risk. Shropshire Council reported that the intention was no longer to merge the OLR project with the NWRR in terms of the LEP contract and its reporting. The LEP requested that a formal position paper be drafted by Shropshire Council ahead of the 25 January 2022 LEP Board meeting to rescind the original request.
10 th Nov 21	Email	The LEP requested specific information from the OLR team to enable the Funding Agreement to be varied and confirmation of the governance position in preparation for the January LEP Board. This information was not provided
16 th Dec 21	PRMC Meeting	The PRMC had not received the information requested from the OLR team
25 th Jan 22	Board Meeting	The Board confirmed that it still had not received the information from the OLR team
8 th March 22	Email	The LEP sent an email requesting that a formal position paper be provided for the April Board and that the project provide an updated profile to enable the contract to be varied. The updated profile for the variation is still outstanding
26 th April 22	Board Meeting	Shropshire Council confirmed they were committed to OLR and a planning decision was anticipated in the 1 st quarter of 2022. The Council confirmed that the OLR and NWRR schemes were being treated as separate schemes for accounting purposes but were being run in parallel as one scheme for ease of project management and to reduce construction costs. Originally the intention was to bring both schemes into a single project but following discussions with partners, it was agreed that, for the purposes of accountability, the partners would require separate accounting structures because the funding for the 2 road schemes was coming from different funding pots. The delivery of the projects would however continue in parallel to allow savings in construction costs. The Board approved the de-linking of the 2 road schemes
15 th Dec 22	PRMC Meeting	The OLR Team highlighted A number of factors have impacted the planning determination date including the Environment Agency, Severn Trent, and Natural England objections to the planning. The final statement of environmental information is due to be submitted on 19 January 2023 which will satisfy their objections. It is hoped that the planning determination will be complete in March 2023. Procurement is now underway with an open tender

24 th Jan 2023	Board Meeting	During a presentation on the status of the OLR, the OLR team confirmed that a planning decision would be made in March 2023 and work would start in March 2024. The OLR scheme remained affordable and deliverable. Shropshire Council had completed the planning submission which addressed all the outstanding concerns with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Severn Trent Water.
27 th Apr 2023	PRMC Meeting	The risks associated with OLR were flagged again. Risk levels would remain high until a planning decision was made, this was due in March, but the committee noted this had now been delayed until June. The possibility of clawback was discussed because the road scheme should have been completed in 2020/21, however it was agreed that any decision should be delayed until after the planning decision. The OLR had also been invited to present at the next PRMC in June.
16 th June 2023	Email	An email was sent by the LEP, on behalf of the PRMC, to the OLR team seeking reassurance that the OLR would be delivered regardless of the planning decision concerning the NWRR that was due on the 18 th July. Without this commitment the process would commence to clawback the £4.2m grant that was awarded to Shropshire Council.
22 nd June 2023	PRMC Meeting	The OLR team was invited to present on the status of the road scheme but declined to attend because the planning decision that had been expected in June had now been delayed until the 18 th July. The PRMC recommended to the LEP Board that it trigger clawback if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the plans do not go to committee when it is scheduled to on 18 July; ○ the plans are not approved for the NWRR, or ○ there is no approved start date for work to commence on site for the OLR by the next Board meeting on the 18th July.
7 th July 2023	Email	Shropshire Council confirmed that the OLR and NWRR would not be going to the planning committee on the 18 th July, the decision would be delayed until September.
12 th July 2023	Email	In response to an email sent by the LEP on the 11 th July, Shropshire Council confirmed that the planning decision for the road schemes had been delayed because of the continuing objections from the Environment Agency about the potential threat posed by the schemes to Shrewsbury's borehole sourced water supply. However, the Council remained confident that a positive planning decision would be delivered.
18 th July 2023	Email	In response to an email sent by the LEP on the 13 th July, Shropshire Council confirmed that if the NWRR was rejected it could potentially take up to 18 months to resubmit the OLR scheme

Present Position

Since the first claims were submitted by the project in 2015/16, claims have only been missed on 7 occasions, the last being in July 2018/19.

Outputs	Contract	Delivered	Position	% Delivered
Match	£8,734,222	£590,926	£-8,143,296	7
Jobs created	1090	23	-1067	2
Employment land (hectares)	12	0.9	-11.1	8
Housing units	835	109	-726	13
New roads (km)	1.14	0	-1.14	0
Roads resurfaced (km)	2.05	0	-2.05	0
New cycleways (km)	4.26	0	-4.26	0

LGF Spend profile

Funding Source	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Single Local Growth Fund (£)	163,306	308,152	1,089,037	1,087,186	392,871	1,159,447	4,200,000