



The Rt Hon Louise Haigh MP
Secretary of State for Transport
By Email

2nd September 2024

Dear Louise

Many congratulations on your appointment. I was very pleased to see your recent commitment to invest unprecedented levels of funding in cycling and walking. This is crucial to give residents real choice and tackle mobility and health challenges together.

I write today following the letter sent to you by the Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council dated 31 July 2024 re 'Herefordshire Council – Levelling Up Fund, Hereford Transport Package and new Growth Corridor'. That letter requested your approval to release £35m of Herefordshire's £102m Local Transport Fund allocation for Phase 1 of the Western Bypass.

However, the original LTF allocation letter dated 1 March 2024 states clearly that "It will be for your locally elected representatives, working with local MPs, to decide how to spend this money".

I do not support this proposed £35m expenditure, as the Leader and the Chief Executive know. The request to you for release of this funding therefore does not meet the criterion of 'working with local MPs'.

I will be discussing this further with the Leader and Chief Executive. In the meantime, I ask that you do not approve this expenditure request, which in my view represents very poor value for money.

The evidence base for both Phase 1, and for the full Western Bypass, is very weak. Alternative approaches – much quicker and cheaper – could yield equivalent congestion reductions at a fraction of the cost. Indeed, this was the conclusion of the 2021 Hereford Transport Strategy Review.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss proposals for truly sustainable transport planning for Herefordshire with you and your officials, along with Herefordshire Council, at the earliest opportunity. I am sure we can find common ground.

I look forward to working together to develop a truly sustainable transport strategy for Herefordshire.

Yours sincerely,

Ellie Chowns MP, North Herefordshire.

Copies sent to:
Paul Walker, Chief Executive, Herefordshire Council
Jonathan Lester, Leader, Herefordshire Council
Jesse Norman MP, Hereford and South Herefordshire