

DATED

20th January 2026

Highways Act 1980

Acquisition of Land Act 1981

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (Southport Eastern Access)
Compulsory Purchase Order 2025

Summary Proof of Evidence: Andrew Dunsmore
CPO and Need for the Scheme

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Andrew Dunsmore and I am the Transport Planning Manager for Sefton Council. I have led the Development of the Southport Eastern Access scheme since its inception in 2018.
- 1.1 I have 39 years' experience in the field of highways, transportation and regeneration, 35 years of which have been working for Sefton Council. I have a degree in Civil Engineering.
- 1.2 The evidence that I have prepared and provided in this Proof of Evidence has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the evidence is true, and the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.
- 1.3 This evidence provides the Sefton Council overview of the case for the Scheme, including the need and the objectives.

2 Need for and Purpose of the Scheme

- 2.1 The Southport Eastern Access Improvement Scheme focuses on the eastern approach to Southport Town Centre in an area which is recognised as having a mixture of light industrial, retail, and residential uses.
- 2.2 In the course of negotiations with Leicestershire County Council it became apparent that the CPO Map had excluded land which was required for the Scheme. The reason for this was that the parties had previously believed that the land was highway land when it was in fact not.
- 2.3 The Inspector has the power to modify an Order to include land which had not originally been included under s.14 of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 as long as all persons interested consent. The Council are working towards an agreement with the relevant landowner (LCC) to reach consent to this modification.
- 2.4 As funding opportunities arose, the Scheme was split into Phases to enable delivery. Phase 2 for the Southport Eastern Access Scheme is shaded blue in Figure 2.1:

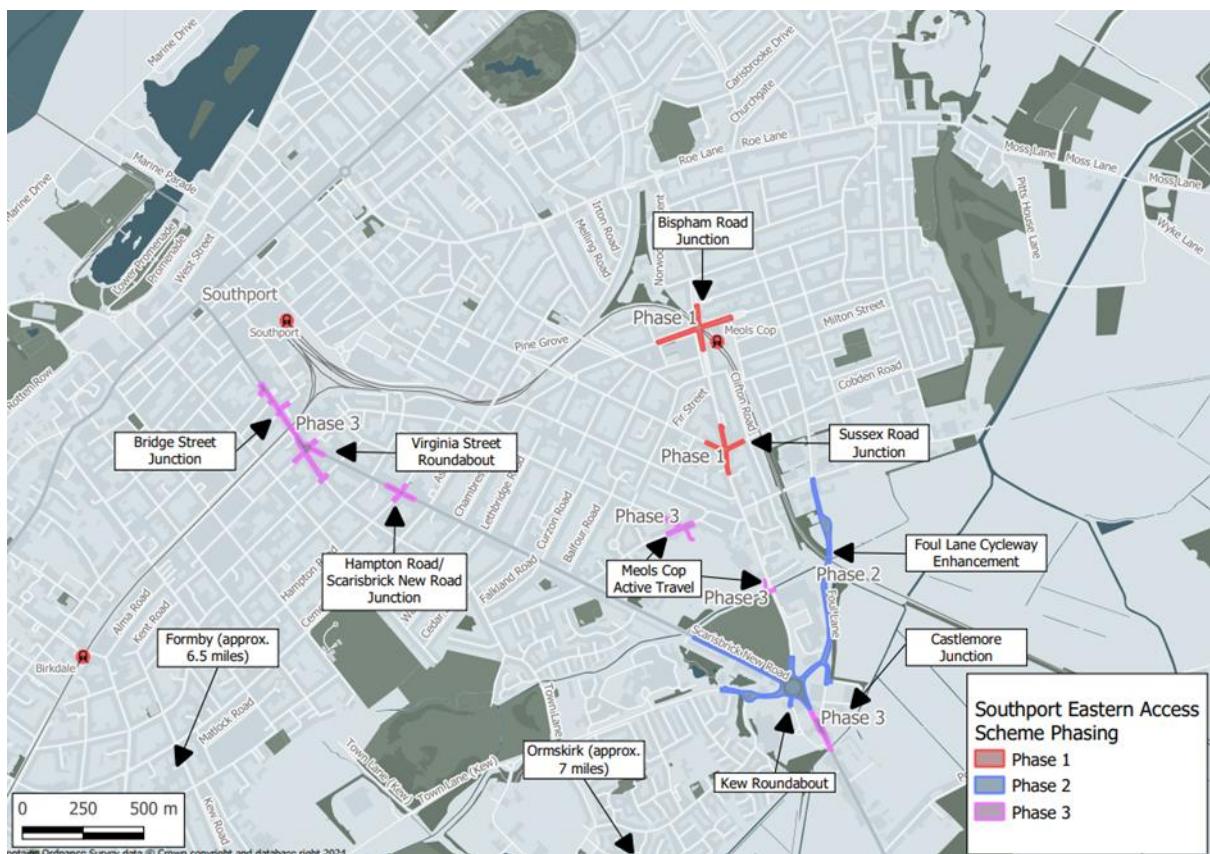


Figure 2.1 – Southport Eastern Access Scheme Phasing

- 2.5 The Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (Southport Eastern Access) Compulsory Purchase Order 2025 ("the CPO") concentrates solely on land required to deliver Phase 2.

Need for the Scheme

2.6 The scheme is considered to deliver on government objectives at a local, sub-regional and national level, in line with a strategy that seeks to promote economic development and improve accessibility to communities, including via active modes. It is also closely aligned with a number of ongoing developments within the region.

2.7 The Scheme aims to manage future congestion, support sustainable growth, and improve access to key sites. It promotes walking and cycling, reduces car dependency and emissions, enhances safety and inclusivity, and helps tackle transport-related social exclusion, delivering environmental, economic and community benefits.

Policy Framework

2.8 The Scheme is supported at national, regional and local policy levels in Sefton. The Scheme supports and complements the Council's approach towards improving its economy and employment and transport facilities. This policy basis forms part of the justification as to why there is a compelling case in the public interest.

2.9 The scheme objectives, as outlined in Figure 2.2, are derived from the objectives of the CRSTS funding scheme. The objectives that the Scheme achieves aligns with a wider range of National and Local Policy Frameworks.

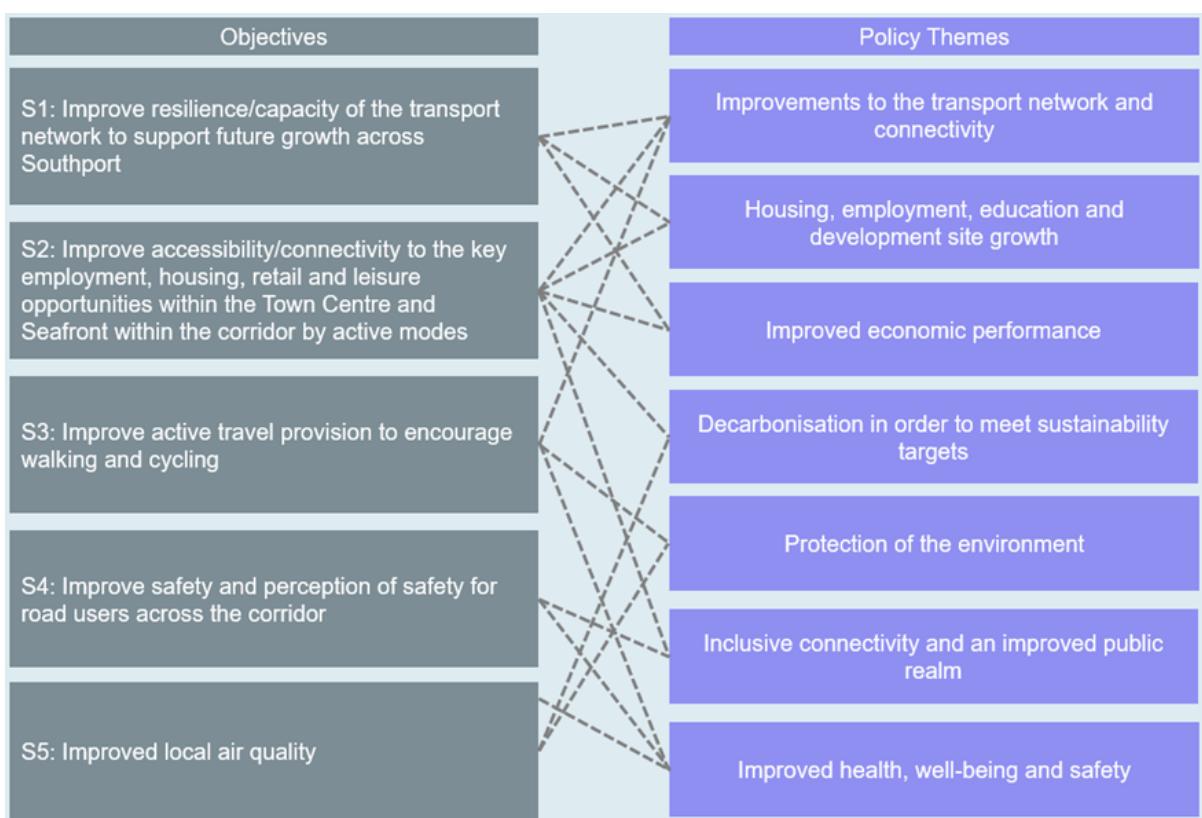


Figure 2.2 – Southport Eastern Access Scheme Objectives

3 Funding

- 3.1 Throughout the development of Southport Eastern Access, Sefton Council has utilised cost consultants and contractors to provide construction cost estimates that have informed key decisions on scheme progression.
- 3.2 Phases 1 and 2 were estimated to cost £19.97m to deliver, including development costs including design, surveys and procurement of the works. Balfour Beatty was commissioned to undertake a feasibility study assessing the deliverability of all three phases. Their review produced a delivery programme and robust cost estimate, concluding that Phases 1 and 2 could be delivered within the £19.97 million budget and within the available funding window.
- 3.3 A Grant Funding Agreement was signed between Sefton Council and LCRCA, confirming an allocation of £19.97m from CRSTS to go towards the delivery of Southport Eastern Access. This funding will be used to cover the cost of construction of Phases 1 and 2, in addition to the cost of land acquisition.
- 3.4 This demonstrates that government-backed funding is fully secured, ensuring the Secretary of State can be confident the scheme will be delivered if the CPO is confirmed.

4 Planning

- 4.1 In general, the elements of the Scheme that will be delivered within the existing highway boundary will proceed on the basis that they are not defined as 'development' needing permission in Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Local Planning Authority has confirmed that planning permission will be required for areas which will be converted to highway. Therefore, two applications are needed for the works. These applications are:
 - a) Kew Roundabout – application reference DC/2025/00906
 - b) Foul Lane – application reference DC/2025/00711
- 4.2 The Council does not foresee any issue with the granting of planning permission, which we anticipate will be granted prior to the Inquiry, and nor will the process delay or impede the delivery of the Scheme. The Inspector will be updated on this before the Inquiry opens.

5 Compulsory Purchase Order

- 5.1 This section sets out the purpose and justification for the use of compulsory purchase powers to deliver the Southport Eastern Access Scheme. It explains why Sefton Council has applied for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), the statutory framework governing its confirmation, and how the scheme meets the relevant legal and policy tests.
- 5.2 Sefton Council has made the CPO under Sections 239 and 240 of the Highways Act 1980. The Council is satisfied that the extent of the land and rights to be acquired is the minimum required to construct and operate the scheme while meeting its objectives.
- 5.3 The key principles the Secretary of State must consider during confirmation, as set out in the Guidance on Compulsory Purchase Process and the Crichel Down Rules are:
 - evidence of a compelling case in the public interest;
 - demonstration that the land is required at this time;
 - a clear explanation of the intended use of the land;
 - confirmation that funding is available;
 - assurance that there are no legal or physical impediments to delivery;
 - evidence that use of compulsory acquisition is a last resort; and
 - compatibility with human rights obligations, ensuring any interference is proportionate and justified.
- 5.4 The Council demonstrates a compelling public interest case, emphasising the economic, social and environmental benefits of the Southport Eastern Access Scheme. These include supporting economic growth, reducing emissions and car dependency, improving safety and inclusivity, enhancing active travel infrastructure, and addressing transport-related social exclusion. The Council has weighed these benefits against the private impacts associated with land acquisition and concludes that the public interest clearly outweighs the private loss.
- 5.5 On land requirements, reference is made to evidence showing that the design has been rationalised and that all land included in the CPO is essential. The Council has a clear intended use for each plot, with full details provided in the Scheme Design Proof.
- 5.6 Funding is confirmed to be in place, with the scheme programmed to commence in 2026 and complete in 2027. The Council is therefore satisfied that the test in paragraph 14 of the CPO Guidance is met.
- 5.7 Regarding impediments, the Council confirms that most works fall within the existing highway boundary and are therefore not classed as development requiring planning permission. Where planning permission is required, applications have been submitted and are expected to be granted before the Inquiry.
- 5.8 The Council also demonstrates that compulsory purchase is a last resort, with evidence of efforts to acquire land by agreement. It further addresses human rights considerations, confirming that any interference with Article 1 Protocol 1 or Article 8 rights is lawful, proportionate and justified by the compelling public interest case.
- 5.9 Finally, the CPO is legitimate, necessary and proportionate. Sefton Council considers that all statutory and policy tests are satisfied, and that there is a strong justification for confirming the CPO to enable delivery of the scheme.

6 Conclusion

6.1 In summary, as Transport Planning Manager for Sefton Council and having been involved in the development of Southport Eastern Access since inception in 2018, I consider that:

- The Scheme layout enables the delivery of the traffic and economic benefits detailed in this evidence.
- The Scheme benefits cannot be delivered wholly within existing highway land.
- The land included within the CPO for the scheme is essential to deliver the proposed design.