

Government gives £60 million seal-of-approval for North Devon Link Road

- Department for Transport (DfT) announces £60 million funding for the A361, a key road linking Devon with the rest of the UK
- modernisation and upgrade works set to start this month will cut congestion while providing a boost to the local economy
- scheme is part of wider government plans to level-up transport infrastructure across the country as we build back better from COVID-19

Drivers, businesses and residents in North Devon will soon benefit from a multi-million-pound road upgrade set to get underway this month – thanks to £60 million of investment announced today (10 November 2020) by Transport Secretary Grant Shapps.

The funding will kick-start major works on the A361, also known as the North Devon Link Road:

- slashing journey times
- boosting connectivity
- unlocking housing across the region

The major project, being led by Devon County Council, will boost the local economy by supporting plans for 6,700 new homes in the region, making it easier for people to access job opportunities, and for businesses to get around.

Upgrades will not only benefit regional travel, they're also expected to increase cross-country connectivity by improving people's ability to travel into and out of the Southwest.

Works will focus on a 4.8 mile stretch between South Molton and Barnstaple. The route will be modernised with a wider carriageway, which will greatly improve overtaking opportunities, safety and resilience. The road's capacity and 8 key junctions will be upgraded – and, to boost active travel, facilities for pedestrians and cyclists will be introduced along the route.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

I'm delighted to announce this funding to upgrade a vital gateway between Devon and the rest of the country. These works will boost connections, cut congestion for drivers and improve people's quality of life.

It's a clear indication of our commitment to levelling up and investing in transport infrastructure. Through these works, we'll improve people's ability to travel across the Southwest while providing 1000s with greater access to new homes and new jobs.

Councillor Andrea Davis, Devon County Council Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Development and Waste, said:

This announcement is fantastic news for local residents and for Devon's economy. The upgrade of this road is the biggest transport investment in north Devon for a generation. It will help unlock the true potential of the local economy in northern Devon, and with the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic, that's vital at this time.

We've been working tirelessly on this project for a number of years so it's great to see that effort rewarded with this government funding. We'll now be looking to get work started as soon as we can.

The route provides the most direct link between North and South Devon and is a key route linking the Southwest to the rest of the UK. It also acts as a crucial link between the key economic centres of Bideford and Barnstaple. DfT's investment of £60 million makes up the majority of the total costs of the scheme which is £67.6 million.

Improvements to the A361 are the latest boost to transport in Devon, following the opening of the first phase of a new £80 million sea wall at Dawlish by Rail Minister Chris Heaton Harris in September. This investment will provide a resilient railway for generations to come, and forms part of the government's commitment to deliver reliable, punctual journeys across Devon and Cornwall, helping the Southwest build back better and supporting the local economy and tourism.