

A127 at the forefront of £12,5million transport plans in Southend

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A £4.7MILLION bid to ease congestion at the Tesco roundabout on the [A127](#) in [Westcliff](#) is crucial for the future of Southend, council bosses say.

A full timetable for the improvement works at the Tesco roundabout on the A127 in Southend was revealed by the Echo yesterday – and now Southend Council has released images of how it will look.

The works will take place from October 27 and are scheduled until the end of March, but the authority admits it is pushing through the improvements now in anticipation of a huge business park coming into the area.

[Rochford](#) and Southend councils estimate the planned business park, off Cherry Orchard Way and accessed via Nestuda Way – a junction off the roundabout – will bring 7,380 new jobs to the area over the next 15 years.

The authority admits that while large parts of the A127 are a problem, a predicted increase of traffic because of the business park, set to go ahead within the next three years, is the catalyst for doing the works now.

Paul Mathieson, who is in charge of major projects at Southend Council, said: “A key part of this is opening up the airport business park, which will send out a clear message that Southend is open for business and it sends out a message to potential investors into the town.”

As part of the works, the St Laurence roundabout, which leads off from Nestuda Way, will be improved.

The slip road heading north towards Cherry Orchard Way will be removed, to “simplify”

it for drivers, according to the authority, while another lane will be added to the A127 roundabout junction for motorists coming down past Tesco.

Independent Martin Terry, who is responsible for transport at Southend Council, said: “Developing the area round the airport is pivotal in our plans to create valuable jobs and boost the local economy.

“However, for these developments to go ahead, we first need to have the highways infrastructure in place to handle any increase in traffic. It’s all about keeping the economy going and the traffic flowing.”

The authority also cites a projected increase in 1,785 new homes in the borough as another reason for the revamp, which will see traffic lights installed on all junctions of the roundabout, as well as four extra lanes.

The Government has stumped up £3.3million for the scheme.

Mr Mathieson added: “The airport was a catalyst for our bid. The Government’s policies are favouring regional airports bearing in mind the pressure on runways.”

£12.5million to be splurged on Southend's roads



THE completion of a cycle “ring road” around Southend town centre and improvements to the Tesco roundabout on the A127 are at the forefront of a £12.5million package of transport improvements.

Southend Council, supported with grants from the Government, will plough the seven-figure sum into a series of road enhancements, maintenance works and crossings in 2014/15.

The list of works include:

- £860,000 on creating a cycle route along the north side of London Road, linking into Queensway and completing a cycle link around the town centre, as well as improvements to the [A13](#) roundabout and footpath repairs
- £4.7million on the A127 on the Tesco roundabout, with works set to start on October 27
- £449,000 set aside for car park maintenance and more facilities
- £202,000 on design work for improvements to the Harp House roundabout near [Southend Airport](#) and the construction of a pedestrian crossing in Eastwoodbury Crescent
- £600,000 on road resurfacing works The council is only using £2.8million of its own cash for the projects, with the rest of the total made up from grants, Government funding, and cash set aside from developers.

Independent Martin Terry, councillor responsible for transport, said: “Over the next year we want to say as a town, we are open for business, and we will continue to look at works to reduce congestion and make travelling around Southend easier.”

Works on the A127 Tesco roundabout will start at the end of next month, to create four extra lanes on the various junctions coming on to the roundabout, an extra lane on the roundabout itself, and traffic lights on each turn-off.

The authority will also use cash to drum-up designs for an improved Harp House roundabout, and the entrance to the airport, taking into account current congestion problems.

It will also take into account the airport’s growth and strain on the local roads, particularly if a new housing estate on the old Ekco site is built.

Mr Terry added: “The ring route around the town centre is an interesting prospect and, for example, it could mean that someone flies in from Holland, gets off at Victoria, rents a bike and goes riding around the town centre.

“We want to promote cycling and sustainable transport in the borough.”

The budget is made up of many of the projects already put forward by the previous Tory administration before they were displaced by the current Lib Dem, Independent, and Labour group.

Also showing in the list of projects is £250,000 to be spent on the [Shoebury](#) seawall scheme drummed up by the Tories, but the Echo understands this cash will be re-routed elsewhere while the authority reviews the buffer in one of its flagship policies. One Conservative, who has lobbied for a pedestrian crossing at Eastwoodbury Crescent, is happy though.

Mark Flewitt, Tory highways spokesman, said: “This is what they are carrying over from our budget and they are sensible ideas.

“Pedestrianisation at the airport was one of its weaknesses – both for the airport and the retail park and I think this will serve the public well.”