

North West Relief Road Inquiry – Presented by Councillor Rob Wilson

This Council Notes

- 1) The original cost of the North West Relief Road was £71m in 2019 and, on this basis, the Government pledged funding of £54m with a clear warning that any cost increases would be the responsibility of Shropshire Council. That meant the total cost to Shropshire Council at that time was estimated at £17m.
- 2) In 2021 on the basis of the Outline Business Case the cost of the NWRR was estimated at £81m meaning that the cost to Shropshire Council had now risen to £27m
- 3) Before Christmas Shropshire's External Auditor confirmed that the cost of the NWRR had now gone up to £178m and Shropshire Council's contribution to £124m
- 4) The Environment Agency were never happy about the route of the road since a major roundabout junction was placed directly over ground from which much of Shrewsbury's water is drawn and have therefore been very reluctant to support the application because the spillage of any toxic substance would make the ground water unusable while piling work could also damage the town's water supply.
- 5) The NWRR will be a major contributor to the release of carbon which was underestimated when the road was first planned. Recently Shropshire Council has been forced to admit that the contribution has more than doubled from 26,711 tonnes of carbon to 55,904. Originally it had been estimated that the scheme's impact could be mitigated by 2030 but now Shropshire has asked the Northern Planning Committee to revise a condition so that it has until 2050 to offset the road's emissions.
- 6) A further £17m of spending was approved in February 2024 and it has been reported that over £21m has already been spent on the road before work has even started
- 7) That Shropshire Council has commissioned utility diversion work before the NWRR has secured a decision planning notice or a commitment from the Government for extra funding.

This Council Notes

- 1) Shropshire Council has failed to hit numerous deadlines so that a road that was originally planned for completion next year has not been started
- 2) Recently Shropshire Council's External Auditor was highly critical of Shropshire Council for failing to make plans in the event of the Road being cancelled and for failing to oversee the planning and preparations for the Road properly.

This Council Demands

That an Inquiry be appointed by Shropshire Council to

- (i) Investigate the poor management of the North West Relief Road and;**
- (ii) Make recommendations about how capital projects can be better managed in the future.**