

## **COUNCIL 15 DECEMBER 2022**

### **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

#### **Question from Mrs Kris Welch**

In January 2021 Shropshire Council debated a motion to support the Climate & Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill that is currently being debated in Westminster. The Bill calls on the UK government to ensure that the UK contributes fairly to climate mitigation consistent with limiting global temperature increase to 1.5C (compared to average pre-industrial levels). In July 2022 the council's Task & Finish Group agreed to support the Bill (minus the provision on Citizen's Assemblies). The original CEE Bill motion required the council to inform local media of the decision to support the Bill; write to local MPs asking them to support the Bill; and write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support.

Please could the council confirm if these steps have been taken or, if they haven't, outline when they will be. Additionally, will these letters and any responses to them be made publicly available? Can the council confirm it is still committed to helping the UK meet its climate targets?

#### **Response from Councillor Ian Nellins, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

Shropshire Council debated a motion that called on Council to "Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill" on 25 February 2021 and resolved to refer the matter to a Task & Finish Group, which met on 10 February 2022. The T&F group broadly supported the aims of the Bill but was strongly divided on proposals to set up an independent, representative panel of UK citizens. The group did not come to any agreement on how to proceed, so took a vote on a motion to support the Bill outright. This was not carried. The group then voted on a motion to support the bill without the clause to set up a citizens panel. This was carried. The Performance Management Scrutiny Committee then agreed to endorse the findings of the task and finish group at its meeting on 4 May 2022. Shortly after this, the chair of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee took the draft letter to Cabinet on 8 June 2022. Cabinet agreed that the draft letter should be considered by Council, so that Shropshire Council could provide a single response to the bill. The Shropshire Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022 received a report <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s31905/Climate%20and%20Ecology%20Bill%20Council.pdf> recommending that Shropshire Council writes to the sponsors of the Climate and Ecology Bill, to express its broad support for the Bill, but to not support the requirement to set up a national citizens panel,

reflecting the outcome of discussion to date. This recommendation was agreed <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s32422/Minutes%20of%20Previous%20Meeting.pdf> esponse and the agreed response has recently been sent to Zero Hour Shropshire

### **Question from Jamie Russell**

In its Climate Emergency Declaration in 2019, Shropshire Council committed to doing all it could to help the UK meet the 1.5C target enshrined in the 2015 Paris Agreement and achieve net zero by 2050.

In October of this year, the UN Environment Agency said that there was now 'no credible pathway to 1.5C' due to the failure by governments to act on the climate crisis. It stated that only 'a rapid transformation of our societies' would allow us to avoid catastrophic climate breakdown resulting in millions of deaths.

With this in mind, I would like to ask about the North West Relief Road (NWRR) in Shrewsbury:

- a) Will the NWRR increase or decrease Shropshire's total emissions over its lifetime? I note that the council's own data suggests that the road will create around 48,000t/CO<sub>2</sub>e construction emissions for a 359t/CO<sub>2</sub>e annual operational saving.
- b) How many years will it take for the NWRR to be net zero? Please provide evidence for this.
- c) Is the NWRR in line with the UK government's legally-binding 2050 net zero target? If so, how?

### **Response from Councillor Ian Nellins, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

- a. Will the NWRR increase or decrease Shropshire's total emissions over its lifetime? I note that the council's own data suggests that the road will create around 48,000t/CO<sub>2</sub>e construction emissions for a 359t/CO<sub>2</sub>e annual operational saving.

The proposal to deliver the NWRR has been carefully reviewed in the light of the Council's stated carbon position. A rigorous modelling and forecasting exercise, both for the construction phase and the future lifetime use of the scheme has been undertaken and published on the Council's website. Further to this, the methodology and conclusions within the report have been independently reviewed by an academic

specialist at Birmingham University. The findings of the report highlight a net carbon legacy for the scheme in the region of 24k tonnes over the lifetime of the scheme. This impact has already been considerably mitigated through informed design choices (build materials and methodology), and the acknowledgement of net carbon savings on the highways network more widely within Shropshire. In order to reduce this legacy still further, and potential to a net zero balance, Shropshire Council is now exploring a range of innovative carbon in, and off, setting opportunities within the proximity of the new road and Shropshire more widely. The cost and nature of these measures, along with the final carbon account for the road, will be collated within the Full Business Case. This is expected by December 2023 and will be considered for endorsement by all Council Members in advance of its submittance to DfT to release the required construction costs in full.

The independent NWRR carbon report has been publicly available since April 2022 at the following link ;  
<https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2022/04/independent-experts-confirm-carbon-impact-figures-shrewsbury-north-west-relief-road/>

- b. How many years will it take for the NWRR to be net zero? Please provide evidence for this.

In order to reduce the NWRR carbon legacy still further, and potentially to a net zero balance, Shropshire Council is now exploring a range of innovative carbon in, and off, setting opportunities within the proximity of the new road and Shropshire more widely. The cost and nature of these measures, along with the final carbon account for the road, will be collated within the Full Business Case. This is expected by autumn 2023, and will be considered for endorsement by all Council Members in advance of its submittance to DfT to release the required construction costs in full.

- c. Is the NWRR in line with the UK government's legally-binding 2050 net zero target? If so, how?

As described in response to part b, Shropshire Council will consider the delivery of the NWRR, and its carbon legacy and management holistically as part of its wider activities and carbon accounting approach. As such, Shropshire Council will continue to ensure that its

activities are fully aligned with both its local, and national, carbon guidance and targets as required.