

COUNCIL 2 MARCH 2023

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question from Mr Mike Streetly

Could you please provide the latest prediction of total pre-construction spend on the proposed North West Relief Road project compared to budget?

Question from Hannah Peters

I note that Shropshire Council recently announced its decision to support the Climate & Ecology Bill currently in Parliament.

However, I understand that the council refused to support the provision in the Bill for Citizen's Assemblies.

A citizens' assembly brings together a random selection of people from all walks of life to discuss important issues. Those involved get to learn about the issues, discuss them with one another, and then make recommendations about what should happen next.

These assemblies have been used all over the world with great success, not least of all in Ireland (where they were used to break the deadlock over abortion and gay marriage), and also in the UK where the British government set one up to look into the climate crisis in 2020.

Given the success of Citizen's Assemblies and the UK government's own commitment to them, can Shropshire Council please explain its dislike of them? Does the council believe that there is such a thing as 'too much' democracy?

Question from Emma Bullard

In February the Welsh government announced the result of a major review of its transport policy.

All new roads in Wales will need to be judged on strict criteria in order to mitigate the climate emergency. These criteria are:

- 1) Any new road must not increase carbon emissions
- 2) Any new road must not increase the number of cars on the road
- 3) Any new road must not lead to higher speeds and higher emissions
- 4) Any new road must not negatively impact the environment.

Future road projects will need to improve safety, help with a shift to public transport, walking and cycling, and provide connections to jobs.

Does the council accept this is a good model for judging new roads?

And can the council confirm whether the North West Relief Road (NWRR) passes or fails each of the four criteria listed?

If the NWRR fails these tests, can the council explain why it continues to support the NWRR?

Question from Chris Naylor

As a Shropshire resident living in a rural community, I and others deplore the proposed cutbacks at BBC Radio Shropshire which will mean both reduced coverage of local issues and news, and less sharing of community information about vital local support networks and events. Does the Leader agree that losing Radio Shropshire is bound to mean less support for our isolated rural villages, and even more focus on our urban centres instead? Can she please set out what representations she has made to challenge this unhelpful reform?