

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee
Meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams
At 6.00pm on 24 May 2021

Please note this is an informal virtual meeting of the Committee convened to assist the Town Clerk with carrying out the delegated powers granted to her by Full Council on 22 March 2021 & Finance & General Purposes Committee on 12 April 2021.

PRESENT

Councillors N Green (Chairman) R Dartnall, M Davies, J Dean, K Halliday, C Lemon, P Moseley, A Mosley, K Pardy, D. Vasmer, A Wagner, B Wall and R Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Michelle Farmer (Planning Committee Clerk)

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Bentick and Councillor Gillam.

1/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

(i) Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no pecuniary interests declared.

(ii) Declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest

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| Shropshire Councillors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council’s relationship with Shropshire Council |
| Councillors D Vasmer and A Wagner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a member of Shropshire Council Northern Planning Committee, they reserve the right to take a different view of the same applications considered in light of any additional information presented to the Northern Planning Committee. |

2/21 SHREWSBURY NORTH WEST RELIEF ROAD SCHEME

The Chair opened the meeting by introducing the two main items for discussion which were:

- a) The proposal for the North West Relief Road scheme (21/00924/EIA).
- b) In accordance with the Town Council’s Standing Orders, a motion proposed by Councillor Alan Mosley as follows: *That this Council is strongly opposed to the creation of the North West Relief Road and hence objects to the current planning application. Furthermore, we pledge to do all in our power to oppose any further associated developments.*

The Chair started the discussion by explaining that the scheme comprised:

- Construction of 6.9km single carriageway (7.3m wide) road
- Severance of local roads and footpaths
- Provision of combined footway/cycleway
- Erection of three bridged structures over carriageway
- Diversion of existing bridleway/footpath via an underpass
- Climbing lane on westbound approach
- 670m long viaduct; bridge over railway
- Two flood storage areas; provision of two new roundabout junctions and improvements to two existing roundabouts
- Associated traffic calming measures, landscaping and drainage schemes

He then went on to explain the role of the Town Council's Planning Committee in the planning process, confirming that the committee was not the decision maker but only a consultee. He also outlined to the committee the rules on pre determination for decision making, particularly for those members who were also members of the Northern Planning Committee.

Finally, he clarified that the Planning Committee would consider and respond to the application for the North West Relief Road as they would any other and the term 'North West Relief Road' would be used throughout the meeting as that is the title given on the planning application.

The Chair then opened up the discussion to councillors to make comment on the application.

The Mayor, Councillor Dean, spoke first saying that the proposal appeared to be that for a road that may have been considered 40 years ago but the declaration of a Climate Emergency by Shropshire Council in 2019 demonstrated that it was no longer an appropriate approach. As a result, he opposed the application. The road would result in a significant use of fossil fuels when the strategy should be concentrating on the development and usage of public transport.

He also stated that the COVID-19 pandemic over the previous 15 months had clearly changed people's behaviour. He explained that we still did not know the outcome of this effect but there was likely to be considerably less commuting in the future. The application assumed that business as usual would return after the pandemic had ended but the evidence was showing that this was clearly not the case. He explained that Herefordshire Council has recently considered alternatives to developing a similar road and advised that Shropshire Council look at these plans and consider alternatives.

Councillor Halliday then stated that she would also oppose the application on the grounds that it would be ineffective in reducing traffic. She also stated that the Shropshire division of Cycling UK had stated that the road would not be appropriate for cycling and that the visual impacts of the road were clearly understated in the application.

Councillor Moseley explained that she was against the application due to its impact upon pollution, damage to habitat, its visual impact, the lack of consideration for the Climate Emergency that the application demonstrated and its cost, although she appreciated that the latter was not part of the planning process.

Councillor Wagner stated that there were strong concerns from Midland Portfolio on behalf of Severn Trent water about the impact of the development on the water supply to the town.

Councillor Lemon echoed the concerns already expressed adding that the building of the road was largely about the opening up of more development land which the people of the town did not want.

Councillor Davies also agreed with the comments already made adding that the development missed the opportunity to develop an active travel plan. She stated that it was clearly not right for Shropshire Council to declare a Climate Emergency in 2019 and then fall at the first hurdle.

Councillor Wilson added that it was a great shame that alternatives to the road had not been considered and that Shropshire Council's commitment to walking and cycling in some of its policies was not demonstrated in the application. He also expressed great concerns that the road would considerably increase noise in areas of the town such as Shelton.

Councillor Vasmer stated that he was also greatly concerned that the application was a direct contradiction to Shropshire Council's climate emergency commitments and that the scheme should be reviewed in light of these commitments.

Finally, the Chair stated that he was against the application as it would increase pollution and noise. He was also greatly concerned that the impact the road may have on the town's many historical buildings had not been properly considered.

The Chair then explained that he would ask members of the Planning Committee only to take a vote on whether or not they wished to oppose or support the application for the North West Relief Road scheme (21/00924/EIA).

The result was as follows:

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| Councillor Dartnall | Objects to the application |
| Councillor Davies | Objects to the application |
| Councillor Green | Objects to the application |
| Councillor Halliday | Objects to the application |
| Councillor Lemon | Objects to the application |
| Councillor Moseley | Objects to the application |
| Councillor Vasmer | Objects to the application |
| Councillor Wall | Supports the application |

Result: The Planning Committee of Shrewsbury Town Council objects to the application for the North West Relief Road scheme (21/00924/EIA).

- b) The Chair then instructed the Planning Committee to consider the motion put forward by Councillor Alan Mosley in advance of the meeting:

That this Council is strongly opposed to the creation of the North West Relief Road and hence objects to the current planning application. Furthermore, we pledge to do all in our power to oppose any further associated developments.

The Mayor, Councillor Dean, and Councillor Lemon supported the motion but asked that the following wording be added:

We believe the planned road to contradict Shropshire Council’s recent welcome commitment to ‘policies that follow the hierarchy of traffic reduction, modal shift and electrification’ and so call on Shropshire Council to halt it’s processes leading to the North West Relief Road and instead divert capacity to producing a plan for sustainable transport that will both address congestion issues, and support inclusive connectivity, health, and rapidly reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Councillor Vasmer also asked that a final sentence be added as follows:

In addition, Shrewsbury Town Council requests that Shropshire Council makes a full appraisal of sustainable alternatives to the North West Relief Road in the light of the declared climate emergency and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councillor Mosley stated that he was supportive of the additions and added that during his campaigning for the recent elections it had been clear that most of the residents he had spoken to in Castlefields and Ditherington were against the proposal. He also wanted to be clear that the Big Town Plan was not reliant upon the building of the North West Relief Road.

The Chair then asked members of the Planning Committee only to take a vote on whether or not they wished to oppose or support Councillor Mosley’s original motion along with the two additions from Councillors Dean, Lemon and Vasmer. The result was as follows:

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| Councillor Dartnall | Supports the original motion and the additions |
| Councillor Davies | Supports the original motion and the additions |
| Councillor Green | Supports the original motion and the additions |
| Councillor Halliday | Supports the original motion and the additions |
| Councillor Lemon | Supports the original motion and the additions |
| Councillor Moseley | Supports the original motion and the additions |
| Councillor Vasmer | Supports the original motion and the additions |
| Councillor Wall | Objects to the original motion and the additions |

Result: The original motion and the additions were supported.

Resolved:

- That the Deputy Town Clerk draft a response to the application for the North West Relief Road scheme (21/00924/EIA) including the material considerations expressed by members during the meeting and the motion and its additions supported by members.
- That a letter outlining the motions be sent separately to Shropshire Council.