



**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
7 DECEMBER 2020**

Agenda No

11(ii)

Officer: Helen Ball Town Clerk

HYDRO-SCHEME FOR THE WEIR

1 Purpose of the Report

- (i) To appraise the Committee on discussions to review the potential for a Hydro-Scheme for the Weir;
- (ii) To consider the Council's involvement in such a scheme;
- (iii) To consider part-funding feasibility work alongside Shropshire Council.

2 Background

Members will be aware that there have been previous proposals for the development of a Hydro-Scheme at the weir. These proposals were being progressed by a private Community Interest Company at the time when Feed-in-Tariffs were available. The project never proceeded as the return on investment for an investor was not viable enough.

Things have changed since. Both Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council have declared Climate Emergencies and registered their commitments on carbon neutrality and in so doing have developed plans for carbon reduction, including energy production.

3 Plan going forward

The Town Clerk has had a number of conversations with the Climate Emergency Taskforce Leader at Shropshire Council and more recently the three Group Leaders and Town Clerk were invited to a meeting with the Leader of Shropshire Council and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change to discuss an approach to developing a Hydro Scheme on the Castlewalk Recreation Ground. Unfortunately, only Councillor Vasmer and the Town Clerk were able to attend due to the other Group Leaders having other commitments and connectivity issues.

From those present there was an appetite for the Town Council to be an active partner in a scheme with Shropshire Council being the lead partner. Discussions included the need to liaise with the EA both in relation to the scheme but also the proximity to the Fish Pass. Use of Town Council land was discussed and it was felt that the land should remain in Town Council ownership. There were initial discussions on financing and apportionment and the potential of ring-fencing the revenue receipts to support other environmental projects in the town once any borrowing had been repaid.

There would be a need to commission feasibility work to take the project from concept through planning and to delivery and it was felt that a jointly funded commission might be the most appropriate route.

The Town Clerk has had further discussions with the Climate Change Taskforce Leader since to begin to scope out the works and costings.



Work would need to include:

- Technical Feasibility
- Technical Design Review
- Ecology Survey
- Heritage impact
- Formal engagement with EA
- Waste/Public Protection Engagement
- Planning proposals and submission of application to the Planning authority

Ball Park figure for the works was between £30-40k

4 Recommendations

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That the Town Council confirms its active interest in the development of a Hydro-Scheme at the Weir in partnership with Shropshire Council;
- (iii) That a sum of £20k is set aside from the Climate Emergency Fund to jointly commission necessary feasibility works;
- (iv) That the Town Clerk continues to work with the Climate Change Taskforce Leader, keeping the Group Leaders and the Committee informed of progress.