

10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Shrewsbury
30 April 2021

Dear Prime Minister

We were very pleased to see you recently accepting the Committee on Climate Change's recommendation for a 'world leading' target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2035 by 78% from 1990 levels to follow up the existing target of a 68% reduction by 2030. I think that we can all agree that meeting these targets will be very challenging and, as you have said, "unless we take urgent action, we will get 3°C hotter,"

I would therefore like to draw your attention to the following planning application for a 7 km road outside Shrewsbury. 21/00924/EIA | North West Relief Road scheme
<https://pa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=QOXI5QTD06Z00&activeTab=summary>

The majority of the funding for this road (£55M) is from the Large Majors fund from the Dept for Transport. In its draft business case submission to the Department of Transport in 2017 (<https://shropshire.gov.uk/roads-and-highways/shrewsbury-north-west-relief-road/outline-business-case-abc/>) Shropshire Council stated that the strategic outcomes from building the road included:

- To protect and enhance Shrewsbury's built and natural environment
- To contribute towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions

Because it claimed that the road would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it also included a monetary benefit of £3,350,000 NPV for these in its appraisal of the project.

Shropshire Council has now carried out a climate change assessment for the project which shows that constructing the road would emit ~70,000 tonne CO₂e and the annual savings would be only 356 tonnes CO₂e. For context, Shropshire Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has set a target of cutting its emissions (currently 13,659 tonnes CO₂e/ann) to zero by 2030.

The road will also involve cutting down eight irreplaceable veteran oaks and 4 km of hedgerows as well as impacting a RAMSAR wetland through increased air pollution. The Environment Agency has submitted an objection to the planning application on this basis and the potential impact on the town's water supply borehole.

Despite this, Shropshire Council is pressing ahead with the application. This has resulted in widespread opposition from Shrewsbury and across Shropshire and beyond: the application has already generated over 2000 objections and we are aware that there are at least a further 1000 that the planning department has not had time to process yet: this will exceed the number of objections to the recent plans for the new coal mine in Cumbria. The campaign has featured heavily in the local press (including an hour on Radio Shropshire on 29 April) but is also now reaching regional news (extended feature on BBC Midlands Today TV on 28 April) and national press

(https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/26/shrewsbury-activists-fight-save-old-oak-threatened-by-new-road?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

It seems to us inevitable that, if Shropshire Council presses ahead with this application through the inevitable public inquiry/judicial review process (probably set to happen this autumn), there will only be more adverse profile for another UK carbon emitting project at a time when it is very important for the UK to show that it is not only 'talking the talk' but also 'walking the walk'. At the end of the day, we find it hard to see how this road will progress in the current climate so, the sooner it is stopped, the sooner we can get on with 'building back greener'.

I therefore urge you to press the Department for Transport to carry out an urgent review of the funding of this road to avoid increasing and ongoing embarrassment for the UK at a time when we need to be leading the world by example.

Regards

Mike Streetly
On Behalf of Better Shrewsbury Transport

CC (by email)

Alok Sharma COP26 President

Grant Shapps Secretary of State for Transport