



# Shropshire-wide Bus Upgrade Project

The Liberal Democrat Group on Shropshire Council support the aims of the Shropshire-wide Bus Upgrade Project. We welcome this initiative and its emphasis on maintain and improving rural bus services. We believe that Shropshire Council has a public duty to ensure that the county has bus services that meet the needs of its community and to provide the funding to ensure that duty is achieved.

The prevailing political philosophy is that bus services in rural areas must be reduced and the only way forward for public transport is downwards. We reject this. Buses, along with train services, have a major role to play in building a sustainable future for Shropshire. We want more services, not fewer. We want all services to be reliable, safe, comfortable and disability accessible.

Buses are essential to ensuring that our county can meet its sustainability, climate change and social commitments. We see a future where investment in bus networks pays dividends for our local environment in reducing pollution. We see a future where more buses help reduce our county's contribution to global climate change. We see a future where we reduce social isolation, especially in rural areas, by providing effective public transport.

We need a fully functioning bus service throughout Shropshire. We will aim for a service that is regular in nature and can be relied on by users to get them from one location to another at reasonable cost. Services must operate at intervals which make travelling attractive to users and encourage them to leave cars at home. Fares must be set at a level that attracts passengers, including students. We need more bus shelters with up to the minute information on bus arrivals and departures.

Buses are very important to local communities and the local economy. They have a vital role to play in delivering Shropshire Council's high level strategic objectives. Improved bus services and a shift away from car use to sustainable transport are essential to reduce congestion, especially in and around Shrewsbury. New policies and measures are needed to ensure the council's declaration of a climate emergency is translated into real world reductions in CO2 emissions.

A modal shift from car to bus will reduce CO2, reduce pollution and recognise the needs of those in society that may not have access to a car or be able to drive. Town and intertown buses must connect with rail services. The case for reintroduction of Sunday services in Shrewsbury must be examined fully, along with better integration of the county town's park and ride sites with the bus network, especially during major events.

Buses must cause the least possible pollution. This requires a transition to electric buses, a journey on which many other authorities began years ago. The pace of this transition will grow in as technology advances and as electric charging infrastructure is installed across our county. Hybrid electric-diesel vehicles may be a solution for demanding rural routes over the next decade. We will replace all park and ride buses with electric vehicles as a first measure.

We will make refurbishment of Shrewsbury Bus Station a priority, providing a more welcoming environment for bus travellers. This will include the installation of electric charging points for buses.

We will increase the reach of the community bus network to serve rural settlements that feel they are now abandoned by public transport.

We will aim to create more partnership schemes using the powers given to local authorities in the Bus Services Act 2017.