

Dear John Whitelegg

Dear Robert Thompson

Shropshire-Wide Bus Upgrade Project

Thank you for your e-mail requesting the views of the Green Party on the future of buses in Shropshire.

There are two separate Green Parties in Shropshire and this is a combined reply agreed by both.

We fully support the aims and objectives of the project as set out in your July newsletter:

1. To make sure that all councillors, MPs and transport decision makers are aware of the multiple benefits for everyone that are delivered by high quality bus services (reduced congestion in urban areas, reduced air pollution, reduced carbon emissions in line with Shropshire Council's declared "climate emergency" and improved health)
2. To identify the improvements that can be made in bus services so that they more properly meet the needs of all users (students, commuters, visitors to hospitals, those who need connections to stations)
3. To work with other organisations nationally to argue that central government should fund high quality rural bus services at a level to be found in other countries

We call on Shropshire Council to adopt a best practice supportive approach to bus services especially those serving rural areas so that rural residents can live a full, connected life and access jobs, colleges, NHS facilities and leisure activities.

We call on Shropshire Council to commit to year-on-year increases in bus funding and to recognise that buses are vital services that must be protected from budget cuts

We call on Shropshire Council to adopt a robust and supportive bus policy along the lines of another predominantly rural county, Cornwall and to use the new powers for councils set out in the Bus Services Act, 2017.

We call on Shropshire Council to cancel the NWRR and redeploy the £17 million of its own funds for that project to support buses, walking and cycling throughout Shropshire in line with national and international best practice in sustainable transport policy.

We call on Shropshire Council to become a best practice sustainable transport council and with immediate effect and with resources released by the cancellation of the NWRR to progress 6 specific initiatives:

- 1 A 10 year phased plan to convert all diesel buses in the county to electric buses and to adopt this as a key component of its policies that will deliver on the declaration of a climate emergency.
- 2 A new bus station in Shrewsbury following the best practice example of Truro in Cornwall (attractive architecture, armchairs, tea and coffee and real time information and a staffed information point that is not hidden at the back of a cluttered shop)
- 3 New bus routes, enhanced frequencies and timings of services that meet the needs of commuters, those going to college and tourist visits e.g. buses on Sundays and bank holidays
- 4 Bus-train integration on selected services so that buses meet trains (and vice versa) at Craven Arms and Church Stretton and other stations not served by buses
- 5 A travel card modelled on the London Oyster Card that covers all buses in the county and local rail
- 6 A new state of the art park and ride service for Ludlow and enhancement of all Shrewsbury P&R services. All P&R buses would be electric, a 10 minute frequency, toilets, tea and coffee facilities and charges that make P&R very attractive indeed and much less than central car parks e.g. Frankwell

Best wishes

Hilary Wendt, South Shropshire Green Party

Julian Dean, Shrewsbury and North Shropshire Green Party