

**CABINET 7 SEPTEMBER 2022
PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Question from:	Jamie Russell	
Subject:	NWRR	
Portfolio Holder:	Dean Carroll	Approved

I recently made a FOI request to the council asking for a full break down of the money spent to date on the North West Relief Road. From the response from Mr Steve Smith on 18 August, I understand that the council will have spent £20.4m on preparatory work on the project between 2014/15 and the end of 2022. In the breakdown of the figures received in the FOI response the highest single expense was on 'Professional Services Costs' at a total cost of £12.1m over the period. Please could the cabinet provide a breakdown of what this figure encompasses exactly. The term 'Professional Services Costs' is rather vague.

The £12.1m Professional Service Costs incurred by the NWRR to date are the expected and planned project development costs incurred through Shropshire Councils term consultants, WSP, in line with the Outline Business Case forecast.

Key activities within this scope include (although this list is not exhaustive); initial design, developing detailed highway designs, development of the design around the numerous bridges and structures required, oversight of environmental and ground condition surveys, preparation and submitting the current planning application documentation and submitting further detail responses where required by stakeholders, preparation of the required Environmental Statements and associated mitigation plans, engagement with supply chain and key stakeholders, land owner engagement, and ongoing preparation of the Full business Case. This activity, at this cost and level of detail, have been scoped and approved within the Outline Business Case, and is appropriate and commensurate with the requirements of both the Local Planning Authority and the Department for Transport on a project of this scale.

Question from:	Chris Lemon	
Subject:	Zero Carbon New Build School Buildings	
Portfolio Holder:	Dean Carroll	Approved

Shropshire Council has recently completed two "zero-carbon" new-build school buildings, at Meole Brace School and Harlescott Junior School, and has rightly celebrated this achievement in the media. Of course, the local community in Radbrook welcomes these initiatives as a sign that Shropshire Council is starting to give the climate emergency the attention it needs. However, we would like to know why are these high standards not being put in place for the proposed new primary and SEND schools in the Bowbrook Meadows development? These schools are only aiming for "very good" building standards (as opposed to the "excellent" achieved by the other two projects.) The current assessment puts them at a 55% BREEAM (Building

Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method) score, the minimum to achieve "very good", suggesting there is a risk the completed buildings may fall below that. They appear to have no targets for low carbon energy use and are not putting in renewable energy systems. Why is Radbrook not benefiting from the experience at Meole and Harlescott? This is both disappointing and short sighted. With the steep rise in energy prices, new buildings should have renewable energy systems and low carbon design to help with future costs; as well as contributing to zero carbon for Shropshire by 2030. Please explain why this project is being designed to lower standards than at other schools. Will the plans be revised in view of the need to achieve zero carbon standards?

There is a key difference between the completed capital projects at Meole Brace School and the Harlescott Junior School site, and the planned new builds on Bowbrook. The completed projects were procured through the Council's construction frameworks and so were aligned to the Council's climate emergency policy requirements.

The new special school and the separate mainstream primary school builds in Bowbrook are being led by the Department for Education and have been procured through their school construction frameworks. A single contractor will build both schools, realising better value for money for the public purse from the economies of scale. The special school is being fully funded by the Department through their free school programme and the mainstream school by the Council as part of its school place planning programme.

The Department's framework, at the time when the contract was put out to tender, had a requirement for contractors to be built to achieve BREEAM 'very good' for both schools. Contractors cannot be held to a higher specification post-tender. The tenders for these two schools took place in 2020.

Council officers are working closely with the Department and the preferred contractor to ensure that the builds deliver the highest possible energy efficiency standards.

While the build requirement of the new schools is different from the completed school projects, the standards in relation to reducing the carbon footprint are being raised to a level higher than has been previously the case for such builds and are affordable in the context of the current inflationary pressures in the construction marketplace.