

## Myth 1 Shropshire Council has a plan for funding the road?

For years Shropshire Council has been publicly denying that there were any issues with the rapidly escalating cost of the road: in March 2024 they were still saying the price was £80.1M in their press releases. It is finally clear from the council's latest Financial Strategy that there is a £111M funding gap on the project which is now estimated to cost £215M. That's £650 for every person in Shropshire! By comparison, the recent devastating cuts to Shropshire Council's services is equivalent to a mere £191 per person!

The escalation in price is largely due to delays which were mainly caused by the council's repeated failure to address the EA's concerns about the significant risk to the town's drinking water supply. Shropshire Council has known about this issue for decades but has not completed the crucial risk assessments and had them approved by Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency.

Price escalation will also be linked to the appalling way the project has been run. The recent external audit was highly critical of the failure of the project team to hold the supervisory meetings it said it would and complete failure to keep minutes of any meetings held. The departure of senior project lead Mark Barrow by voluntary redundancy by 'mutual agreement' should have been a sacking for the way he has led the project. Consultants WSP should also not escape criticism.

This map shows how much £650/person would be for every town in the county (also £62.3M for the rural areas that the Tories seem to have forgotten about). What would the people of Oswestry's priorities be for £11.4M of spending? Or £3.4M for the people in Bayston Hill? Canvassers will be knocking on doors soon for the local Elections in May - let them know what you think about this.

