

‘Shovel ready project’?

In her recent letter to the Road’s Minister Lezley Picton describes the project as being ‘*shovel ready*’ but this is far from the truth. The project has been continually delayed due to poor decision making and appalling project management (as set out in the recent highly critical [external audit](#)). There seems to reason to think that this inability to deliver the project in a timely or cost-effective manner will suddenly change with the award of huge amounts of extra government money.

Councillor Picton says that the NWRR “*has passed through every point of approval required*”. This again would seem to be wishful thinking. I note that, despite the planning committee approving the planning permission in October 2023, the Planning Decision letter has still not been issued. We will now explain why that might be.

Shropshire Council’s tactic throughout this project has been to punt any difficulties down the line and hope that ‘something will turn up’. This meant that, when the planning application was pushed through the planning committee in October 2023 (with a six to five vote), there were many outstanding issues that, instead of being resolved through the EIA process were passed to 62 planning conditions (38 of which need to be delivered before construction can start. This includes a number of key risk assessments covering important environmental protections for which the outcome is still uncertain). See more discussion on the Environment Agency’s outstanding concerns about the risk to the town’s water supply (Myth 12).