

**CABINET – 24 March 2021**  
**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

1. Questioner's name: Molly Scott Cato	Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor
<p><b>Agenda Item 5: Proposed nomination for open call for a community to host a world first fusion power plant and associated opportunities</b></p> <p>Given that nuclear fusion has been proposed for decades but has never been made commercially viable, can GCC let us know how much public money they propose to invest - directly or indirectly - in the proposal that Nuclear South West themselves admit is a 'moonshot' project?</p> <p>How many jobs do they anticipate the project creating and over what time-frame?</p> <p>What plans have they made to accommodate the additional traffic movements associated with the new plant in what is already a heavily congested area with a poor road network?</p> <p>Have they conducted a climate impact study of a project that will add significant to the country's CO2 burden during a time of climate emergency?</p>	<p>The government has set aside £220m for the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) programme to deliver a net energy prototype fusion power plant by 2040.</p> <p>The joint Berkeley/Oldbury submission is a strong contender with a number of advantages: the sites are licenced nuclear sites that sit next to a plentiful supply of sea water, with good access to existing nuclear specialist supply chains. Gloucestershire County Council has allocated £60k in support of the joint bid.</p> <p>At this very early stage of the process it is difficult to accurately state how many jobs will be created from the STEP programme. However, from similar infrastructure projects, it is estimated the project could create an estimated 31,000 direct and indirect jobs over its duration.</p> <p>Issues in relation to traffic movements and similar detailed points would be considered at a much later stage in the project, if our bid is successful.</p> <p>No full study has been undertaken, but fusion technology has the capacity to play a globally significant role in eliminating all carbon emissions.</p>

<p><b>2. Questioner's name: Ginny Kirkham</b></p>	<p><b>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 7: M5 Junction 9 &amp; A46 Progress Report</b></p> <p>The legacy of Covid is likely to mean fewer cars on the road, especially at peak times, as companies and employees embrace hybrid working and the use of technology (zoom etc) to allow for meetings to occur without the need for travel. With this in mind will the Council reconsider its plans to build a costly, high speed, polluting road south of Ashchurch? I ask you to consider a less intrusive, lower speed road to take traffic away from the residential area of the present A46. Will Council members read “ The Carbon Impact of National Roads Programme” July 2020? <a href="https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/The%20carbon%20impact%20of%20the%20national%20roads%20programme%20FINAL.pdf">https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/The%20carbon%20impact%20of%20the%20national%20roads%20programme%20FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p>This gives a good insight into the damage to the environment of road building.</p>	<p>The reality of the COVID19 impact on traffic has not been to drastically lower the number of cars on the road over time. Whilst there was a brief window of fewer vehicles on the road, there has been resurgence in traffic levels since the low point of April/May 2020. Our data shows that, by the end of 2020, traffic numbers were above the numbers from 2019. One of the main concerns has been the severe drop in bus patronage, with people feeling unable to re-board buses in anything approaching pre-Covid numbers. This has resulted in more car use, rather than less.</p> <p>The current issues with traffic in the M5 junction 9/A46 Ashchurch area are due to the volume of traffic and the inadequacy of the current road network to deal with this traffic. This results in collisions, pollution and extra noise for residents, as well as a barrier to economic activity across the whole of the A46, from south west to north east. Our primary concern here is safety on the road network. Delivering a new road layout and junction will ease the congested nature of the traffic, take pollution, noise and danger away from residents and local businesses, and enable vehicles, including substantial quantities of freight vehicles, substantially smoother, quicker and far more efficient transportation and connectivity.</p> <p>Officers will be asked to read and review the document you have suggested, and feedback to me.</p>
<p><b>3. Questioner's name: Ginny Kirkham</b></p>	<p><b>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 7: M5 Junction 9 &amp; A46 Progress Report</b></p> <p>I believe the Council think that EVs will be the answer to solving environmental concerns regarding the planned expansion of the</p>	<p>The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders data shows that the market share for Battery Electric Vehicles, Plug in Hybrid Electric Vehicles and Hybrid Electric Vehicles is approximately 21.3% for 2021.</p>

<p>A46. However do they appreciate that the price differential of EVs v fossil fuel cars is too great for many people to consider changing and that last year EVs made up only 6.6% of new registrations?</p>	<p>As you may be aware, the government has brought forward the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel-fuelled cars to 2030, with all new cars fully zero-emission at the tailpipe from 2035. This shows a clear commitment at a national level to deliver much needed decarbonisation of the transport industry.</p> <p>EVs are only one part of the Council's commitment to decarbonisation. We are supporting increasing numbers of active travel schemes, working closely with public transport providers, and investigating far reaching zero-carbon schemes such as a Mass Transit scheme. Full details are contained within our very recently adopted Local Transport Plan.</p>
<p><b>4. Questioner's name: Ginny Kirkham</b></p>	<p><b>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 7: M5 Junction 9 &amp; A46 Progress Report</b>  When deciding on routes will the Council take into account the Cotswold AONB, the views from it and the potential noise affecting it? Similarly any SLA (Special Landscape Area) and the development restriction placed on them by TBC in their Local Plan?</p>	<p>The Tewkesbury Borough Plan, as well as other local, regional and national plans are being taken into account at this early stage of optioned development and selection we are currently in. The shortlisted route options for the scheme will be shared at the non-statutory consultation (planned for later in 2021). This consultation will be used to help inform a decision on a preferred route for the scheme, and this process will include liaising with the representatives for the two AONBs in proximity of the scheme area for formal feedback on the proposed scheme and route options. Additionally, more detailed environmental assessment work will be undertaken once the preferred route alignment has been selected.</p> <p>Tewkesbury Borough Council is a key strategic partner in the scheme and has actively engaged in the process to date.</p>

<p><b>5. Questioner's name: Ginny Kirkham</b></p>	<p><b>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 7: M5 Junction 9 &amp; A46 Progress Report</b></p> <p>Could you please expand on the £300m that the OBC could “unlock”. Is this the benefit to Gloucestershire per year when the Ashchurch part of the Trans Midland Corridor is built or when the whole corridor is finished?</p>	<p>The scheme costs are in the early stage of development, and given the complexity of any infrastructure scheme of national significance, we are not yet at a stage where we can be precise. However, if we are successful with our bid to the Large Local Majors Fund at the Department for Transport, then this would bring c.£300m of inward investment into the county to fund the delivery of the M5 Junction 9 and A46 Improvement Scheme.</p>
<p><b>6. Questioner's name: Ginny Kirkham</b></p>	<p><b>Respondent's name: Cllr Nigel Moor</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 7: M5 Junction 9 &amp; A46 Progress Report</b></p> <p>Western Gateway Sub National Transport Body, as you know, is an alliance of 9 councils including Gloucestershire County Council. They investigate possible transport schemes in the area, looking into the potential benefits. In the Economic Connectivity Study 2019 15 schemes were examined.</p> <p><a href="http://weston.ndm-server.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/wg-reb-appendix-a-Economic-Connectivity-Study.pdf">http://weston.ndm-server.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/wg-reb-appendix-a-Economic-Connectivity-Study.pdf</a></p> <p>The schemes were scored according to Productivity Impact, New Employment GVA Impact, Housing (land value gain) and then an over score ranking was awarded.</p> <p>In Table 6.1 Sequencing Rankings for Each Corridor, you can clearly see that the A46 scheme performs badly in all aspects and finishes 15/15 for all schemes. This clearly shows the limited benefit of the scheme you are promoting within Western Gateway area and I worry about the reputational damage to GCC in spending good money after bad promoting it when there seems to be no compelling argument for the scheme to proceed. My question is what do GCC think about Western Gateways ranking of the A46 scheme?</p>	<p>Schemes promoted to the Sub-National Transport Body as potential regional priorities were appraised by officers using local assessment criteria agreed by Board members in March 2019. 13 Large Local Major schemes were promoted. Each was appraised; two schemes were identified as regional priorities and promoted as part of the Sub-National submission.</p> <p>The process used to identify regional priorities is outlined within Part 3 of the Western Gateway's Major Road Network and Large Local Major funding submission in July 2019. This document is publically available on the Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body's webpage.</p> <p>For clarification the A46 strategic corridor was ranked 15/15 by an Economic Connectivity Study completed in July 2019. This study was commissioned by the Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body to inform its Regional Evidence Base. The outcomes of the study did not directly influence the ranking of Large Local Major schemes, and economic assessment is only one specific approach to assessment. Due to the emerging status of the proposed Ashchurch Garden Town development at the time of undertaking the study it did not form part of the economic assessment.</p>

Work on the Western Gateway's Strategic Transport Plan has progressed and the number of strategic corridors has been revised down from the 15 originally identified to four. The M5J9/A46 LLM scheme forms part of the strategically important Midlands to South West Corridor and will help to overcome a critical pinch-point on a route linking the M5 with the M40/M1 as well as providing an alternative route for the heavily congested Birmingham Box (M5/M42). This scheme will improve access to and from the economically important Trans-Midlands Trade Corridor and enable significant growth delivery in Gloucestershire.