Shropshire Council

Date: Thursday, 11 December 2025

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ

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COUNCIL

Public and Member Questions (Pages 1 - 8)

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FULL COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2025

PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

Public Questions – pages 1 – 4

Member Questions pages 5 - 7

1. Question received from Susan Wedlock

This question concerns Shropshire Council's support of the Boxing Day Hunt Meet in Ludlow. At the last council meeting, we asked why the hunt was permitted to bring a pack of unleashed dogs into the town centre despite the Public Space Protection Order which prevents anyone else from bringing even one unleashed dog into the town. Your answer clearly showed that you were not only ignoring documented health and safety risks from hounds and their faeces, but you were keen to treat the Ludlow Hunt - a commercial business - differently from everyone else and and give them privileges for which anyone else would receive fine. Your reply contained significant factual errors and glossed over all of the health concerns highlighted in our question. We have since asked repeatedly for clarification, but all our emails have been ignored.

These are our questions:

When are you going to answer our questions?

Or, if you are ignoring us - why are you ignoring us?

Why are you putting your biased support of the Ludlow Hunt ahead of the health and safety of the public?

All we are asking is that the Ludlow Hunt are treated in the same way as everyone else. That is not unreasonable.

2. Question received from Marcus Watkin

Recent BBC reporting has confirmed that the Shrewsbury Station gyratory bus-stop scheme fails to meet established accessibility standards, creating clear disadvantages for pedestrians, wheelchair users, visually-impaired people and others with mobility impairments. Despite repeated representations from residents, disability groups, businesses and other organisations — together with a petition of nearly 6,500 signatories — the Council has proceeded without revisiting the scheme or addressing the documented accessibility concerns.

There is substantial public concern that legitimate issues have been minimised or dismissed, and that the Council's approach does not reflect the transparency, accountability or equality-duty obligations expected of a public authority.

Formal Questions:

1. On what basis has the Council chosen not to address the accessibility failings identified in the BBC reporting, and how is this decision compatible with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and associated accessibility guidance?
2. What formal weight has the Council given to the petition of nearly 6,500 residents, and why has the Council elected not to take action despite such clear community opposition?
3. Will the Council now commit to an immediate, comprehensive review of the gyratory scheme's impact on disabled people and pedestrians, including structured engagement with disabled user groups and independent accessibility specialists?
4. If such a review is to proceed, what is the Council's precise timetable for commencing the review, consulting affected stakeholders, publishing findings, and implementing necessary modifications?
5. What mechanisms will the Council put in place to ensure transparent, timely feedback to stakeholders and the wider public regarding how their concerns are influencing future decisions?

3 Question received from Joanna Blackman

At the National Emergency Briefing on the climate and nature crisis held last week (27/11/2025), ten of the UK's leading experts briefed an invite-only audience of around 1,250 politicians and leaders from business, culture, faith, sport and the media with the latest implications for health, food, national security and the economy.

Leading experts warned that we face "unprecedented societal and ecological collapse" including starvation, economic collapse, civil unrest and wars if we don't take decisive action to limit further global warming and preserve nature.

Paul Behrens at the University of Oxford said "Britain has seen three of the five worst cereal harvests on record occur this decade. Things could get so bad, it leads to civil unrest, We face a choice. We can continue with business as usual, watching our food systems crumble, and then bracing ourselves for political and civil unrest. Or we can act now."

The Emergency Briefing concluded that we need "a world war II level of leadership – so leadership as if the survival of our society depends on it, because it does". (In the words of Mike Berners-Lee, the chair of the event).

In the light of these unprecedented risks to local, national and global communities, will the Council:

1. Arrange to watch the film of the Emergency Briefing?
2. Discuss and agree a plan for how the Council will play their role as part of this world war II level of leadership?
3. Disseminate this vital information widely, including by organizing emergency briefings for the public?

Links:

National Emergency Briefing:

https://www.nebriefing.org/

New Scientist article:

https://www.newscientist.com/article/2506263-emergency-response-needed-to-prevent-climate-breakdown-warn-experts/

4. Question received from from John Palmer

Has the form for Shropshire Council to apply for £71.361m of Exceptional Financial Support arrived yet from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government? If not, is the Council concerned about being strung along? If it has arrived, have you applied for the £71.361m loan yet? On what date will you apply? Or is there prevarication from this Council? The Tories, who wrecked Shropshire Council's finances, have a lot to answer for.

5. Question from Andrew Sceats

At the July Council meeting I asked a question about the delivery of Cornovii Developments Ltd (CDL) meeting unmet housing need and providing financial assistance to the Council. Having looked at Council accounts for years 23/24 and latest (and earlier) CDL accounts at Companies House I am concerned by; no information available for staff costs including salaries, expenses and other remunerations, no information about office costs and their usage levels. 5 sites have been acquired at a cost of £570,493 of 'worthless' company shares. The sale seems to be questionable as the criteria contained in section 1.9 on page 32 of the Council accounts seem not to have been met. If this is so, it could have serious implications for officers and councillors The Council accounts (page 113) state for CDL total expenditure £0.806 million, income of £0.298 million. Very little financial assistance to the Council for its large financial support to CDL to date! So with the foregoing information, together with new houses for sale being changed to houses to let and a 'price drop event' with sale prices being reduced by 10% Perhaps the 'over engineering' of the new properties using all electric are some of the reasons why

sales have slowed. Would it it not be prudent to suspend any new CDL building projects which have not started and have a revised future vision?

6. **Question from John Crowe (Save our Shirehall)**

If Shropshire Council is formally resolved to proceed with its 2022 resolution on disposal of Shirehall, we note that it was agreed then by Council that terms and conditions would all be subject to approval at full Council. Will the Cabinet Member please confirm that : -

a) - in the event of a sale bring proposed that these terms and conditions will cover all aspects and,

b) - the full Council and public can consider the terms and conditions, as Council previously agreed?

MEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Question from Councillor Sarah Marston

Given the significant safety concerns on the B5476 through Harmer Hill, and the petition signed by 103 residents requesting a reduction in the speed limit, will Cabinet/Council consider reducing the current limit from 40mph to 30mph?

This section of road is residential, with multiple properties and developments accessed directly from the carriageway. The existing 40mph limit creates a dangerous environment for pedestrians, including children and the elderly, and for vehicles exiting side roads such as Bridgewater Place, Lily Pad Cottage and adjacent properties, and the cottages to the north end of the village.

Observations from electronic speed sensors on the A528 and B5476 indicate that most drivers would comply with a 30mph limit if clearly signed. There is precedent for such a change as this was implemented some years ago on the A528 Ellesmere Road in Harmer Hill, and crash data shows a higher incidence of serious and fatal collisions on the B5476 compared to the A528 between 1999 and 2024.
Will Cabinet/Council commit to reviewing this section of road and implementing a 30mph limit with signage, to improve safety for residents and road users?"

2. Question from Councillor Robert Jones

Residents in my division have brought to me their concerns about the impact on the River Perry of an ever-growing number of residential developments. The river's catchment covers a wide area, from Gobowen and the east of Oswestry, across to Ellesmere. Many of these areas have seen and are likely to continue seeing new residential developments. The surface runoff from rainfall on these sites has an impact on river flows, with economic consequences for riparian landowners downstream who are responsible for maintaining the river. In addition to that, there are concerns about the management of wastewater outflows into the river, and the limited capacity of the sewage network to cope with the increased demand from new developments. Both of these issues are considerably exacerbated by the increasing frequency of extreme weather events linked to climate change.

In planning for the future growth and development of our county, how are we going to address these issues to ensure development is sustainable?

Will Shropshire Council be revising and updating its Sustainable Drainage Systems handbook to align with changes introduced by DEFRA earlier this year? Some of the changes introduced include a hierarchy of runoff destination; a requirement that the first 5mm of rainfall be retained through onsite infiltration; and the introduction of design criteria for developments that consider major storm events.

3. **Question from Councillor Chris Naylor**

Cllr Roger Evans kindly responded publicly at 19/11 Cabinet to a Shirehall question from my constituent Jane Gallagher. I appreciate Shirehall is not in my division, however I feel I'm permitted to ask this question as clearly the Council's headquartering is of importance to all.

Cllr Evans, you stated that staff - you said the 'vast majority' - were unhappy with Shirehall. But the few I've spoken to say they are unhappy with Guildhall and strongly wish they were back at Shirehall. So could you please provide any recent survey information/other data to confirm that the 'vast majority' were indeed unhappy with Shirehall. And indeed, please could you share any survey/other data which demonstrates staff are happier here at Guildhall.

Having had experience myself of repurposing older buildings, including regeneration of Kings Cross's modernist estate 'Maiden Lane', I know an effective cost-saving option for a building like Shirehall is a Joint Venture with a commercial partner. The partner injects capital initially to refurbish - and fix the heating Cllr Evans mentioned - so the Council moves back, while retaining ownership, and then agrees opportunities for income generation.

A finance expert assures me this would be attractive to investors. I've also been assured by others who know Shirehall well - including an architect, an engineer, and too a services expert who knows the heating system - that the initial refurbishment investment would be only £3-4 million. Could Cllr Evans please confirm that such a Joint Venture option has been fully considered?

4. **Question from Councillor Brendan Mallon**

Recent problems around severe congestion and Emergency Services access due to the Gyratory works calls into question the assumptions behind the Big Town Plan (BTP). Shrewsbury Moves' Telraam traffic data clearly demonstrates the impact of these works. Year-on-year, traffic on Castle Foregate travelling at 6 mph or less has increased by 657% and across town by 128%. Despite installing a new cycle lane alongside the existing cycle path, two-wheeled traffic on Castle Foregate is down 31%, Wyle Cop 29% and Smithfield 33%, so the dream of increasing cycling has yet to be realised….

To the extent that data-gathering and modelling were conducted to determine the feasibility of the BTP's ultimate objective, removing most road traffic from the town centre and replacing it with foot and cycle movement, do the assumptions made still hold true in light of the actual outcome so far? Can any of these plans be considered valid in the context of the NWRR suspension, a project t fundamental to BTP feasibility? Given the rurality of Shropshire and our ageing population, was there ever solid evidence a transition from cars to cycling was ever achievable? If we wish to continue making profound changes to the lives of Salopians, can you provide Councillors and residents full transparency on all data, modelling and assumptions

used to justify the Gyratory works and the even more sweeping changes to come if we continue with the Big Town Plan?

5. **Question from Councillor Carl Rowley**

In recent months, Kent County Council has claimed savings of £32 million over four years and £7.5 million by 2030 by cancelling estate retrofits and halting EV fleet transition linked to Net Zero targets. Durham County Council has also rescinded its climate emergency pledge, citing financial pressures and the need to prioritise statutory services.

These examples show that significant savings can be achieved by reviewing non-essential commitments. In light of our ongoing financial challenges and the need for greater accountability, will this Council commission an opposition-led internal audit, modelled on the DOGE approach, to identify non-essential expenditure across all departments? Reducing spend in these areas would not affect essential services but could save millions.

The audit should specifically examine:

- *The costs of delivering Net Zero targets and Climate Emergency commitments, including capital works, fleet transition, and governance structures;*
- *Net Zero projects planned for the next two financial years that could be delayed or stopped until our finances are sustainable;*
- *Expenditure on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives, including staffing and programme costs, which could be paused without breaching statutory duties.*

The aim is to provide a clear, evidence-based assessment of potential savings and ensure resources are focused on core services during this period of financial constraint.

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