

CABINET 29 MARCH 2021

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. Paul Gill – (similar question also received from Susan Coleman)

Many parish councils are meeting using zoom or teams but it is unclear how legislation will control this in future. Will the Cabinet support maintaining digital meetings in the future for town and parish councils.

As I am sure you will know it is set in legislation whether meetings can take place virtually or have to take place in person. The emergency legislation in light of the pandemic allowed for virtual meetings for all principal and parish council to take place virtually until 6th May this year. Representations were made by many Councils including this one, to see if the possibility of virtual meetings continuing for a further period could be allowed. The Government indicated on 25 March that it was not prepared to make the necessary changes to the primary legislation due to pressure on the government's legislative programme and in light of the progress being made to tackle the virus. The government has, however, launched a call for evidence on the use of current arrangements and to gather views on the question of whether there should be permanent arrangements before further decisions are made and the Council will be responding to that. We are also aware of a challenge that has been brought by the Association of Democratic Services Officers and others in the High Court that might lead to a change in interpretation of the legislation which could conceivably permit remote meetings to continue but as matters stand currently all Councils will need to plan for face to face meetings from 7th May onwards.

2. Ian Burgess

How does Shropshire Council propose to implement the introduction of Integrated Care Systems in line with the Government and NHS proposals so as to remove divisions or disjointed services between all partner organisations such as GP practices, hospitals etc and how will this improve the service delivery for both physical and mental health?

Within the ICS, Shropshire Council plays a pivotal role in leading both strategic planning and delivering programmes to reduce inequalities and to deliver integration.

The local authority supports communities through business development, social care, arts, culture, leisure and infrastructure. Our strength as an ICS will be demonstrated by working collaboratively to make the best use of all our resources; maximising our assets (human and built), and by integrating services, more people of all ages will be able to access what they need to stay well, close to home.

The experience Shropshire Council has in partnership working, in commissioning and delivering a broad range of quality services, provides the bedrock for this work. The LA has a long history of partnership working, and our ability to lead and support partners has been evident through our system's response to Covid. We have an opportunity to build on the good work of the vaccination and testing programmes, the work to support care homes, PPE, and the work we have done to engage and support communities through the Community Reassurance Team; to improve population health.

The Executive Director of Adult Services will lead the place partnership board – Shropshire Integrated Place Partnership (SHIPP), which will act as the engine for integrated working in Shropshire. The Board includes Primary Care, health providers, Social Care, Public Health, the Voluntary & Community Sector, Healthwatch and service user representation. This Board reports to the ICS Board (currently in shadow form) and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The SHIPP focusses on key prevention programmes that will drive forward integrated working include:

- Social Prescribing (in its broadest sense, further developing our integrated programme with the voluntary and community sector, primary care and other partners, as well as supporting all community referral programmes, including green and creative health prescribing)
- Voluntary and community infrastructure – ensuring that we build on the legacy of Covid, whereby the good will and generous nature of our communities has been in abundance.
- Mental Health – developing preventative approaches, making access to support easy and in a range of methods (face to face, telephone, online), avoiding escalation and crisis.
- Children, young people and families – working collaboratively across the local authority and with health and voluntary sector colleagues to support parenting, early years development, emotional and mental health and access to work and study.
- Rapid access to health and care services when they are needed.

The work is underpinned by our developing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). A key element of the JSNA is understanding our population. Covid has also brought us closer to our communities, through supporting the voluntary sector, through direct delivery of food and other support, through a single access point for people who needed help, through services checking in with service users, and through the Community Reassurance Team, working in communities to engage with people. Building on this the LA must work with partners to continue this dialogue, so that we always understand the make up of our communities, their needs, wants and more importantly to create a 2 way communication channel.

The local authority has already made an impact by working with ICS leaders, to recognise the role of the ICS at place. The ICS has developed governance that focusses on place-based approaches to improve population health and have agreed key principles in order to reduce inequalities.

3. Ian Burgess

When is Abbey Foregate, particularly the stretch between Bell Lane and the Column going to be properly resurfaced as it is a hazard in particular to cyclists and motorcyclists?

The section of carriageway between Abbey Foregate between the column roundabout and Bell Lane remains a priority for maintenance. It is inspected every month and any safety defects will continue to be dealt with. Our design engineers (WSP) will be looking at the appropriate treatments for this road and we aim to undertake this maintenance as soon as funding allows.

4. Susan Coleman

Will Shropshire Council ensure that all the cycleways along Longden Road, Roman Road, Radbrook Road , Bank Farm Road and Red Deer Way used by pupils at Meole & Priory schools will be resurfaced and lines repainted in time for the autumn term 2021

It is the Council's intention to produce a programme of works to clean and reline our existing 1,800 miles of promoted cycle routes, this will be a key role of our interim Active Travel Manager who joins us in mid-April and will produce our Cycling and Walking Plan. Thus a programme of works will come forward, however at this stage I can't provide a commitment that the specific cycle paths referred to will be addressed by September with the exception of Radbrook Road which is identified for re-lining works by a target deadline of 31st July 2021. I can however commit to providing a programme, that will include resurfacing or patching of surfaces will be issued by the early summer.

5. Leslie Maguire

The skate Park in Eastern Oswestry is situated on Shropshire Council land. In recent months Cllr Price and myself have been inundated with calls about antisocial behaviour on the site. Is it possible to provide CCTV coverage for the area, so that it can be monitored? There have also been calls to provide improved skatepark facilities for the young people of Oswestry, can I ask that our thriving partnership, Future Oswestry, use their joined up thinking, to undertake a feasibility study of potential sites and costs in the form of a detailed options appraisal, which can then be considered?

The issue can be raised at the Forward Oswestry Group meeting and considered as part of the wider project. I'm more than happy to raise it, and update.

6. Louis Katz

Can the Cabinet/Council introduce a new funding/grant scheme with the aim of creating jobs, either by supporting small business expansion or assisting startups?

Shropshire Council have received funding from Central Government under the Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG), with the purpose to work up and deliver a range of programmes across the coming financial year. Part of these funds have already seen the delivery of two rounds (to date) of our Discretionary Additional Restrictions Fund (DARG). The fund has seen the payment of more £5.77m of grant funding to businesses not eligible to receive funds through Government's Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG), which is available for business rate payers in eligible premises mandated to close by Government. The additional programmes of activity that are currently being developed will include a range of business support initiatives as part of our economic recovery. There will be an element of focus given to some sectors particularly impacted, including the visitor economy sector and those offering business to consumer services, as well as support for new start up and early stage businesses, and those looking at diversification opportunities, which will include access to both business support initiatives and access to funding. This work will complement the range of existing funding and business support activity currently being delivered by Shropshire Council through our Economic Growth Service and Marches Growth Hub Shropshire.