

22 November 2023
MEMBER QUESTIONS

Question from:	Kate Halliday	
Subject:	Coleham, Parking	
Portfolio Holder:	Dan Morris	Approved

Several residents have contacted me with concerns regarding an increasingly difficult situation regarding on-street parking in Old Coleham, Shrewsbury where there are no parking restrictions. The immediate area does however have parking restrictions, and as it is very close to the town centre it is regularly used by non-residents to park and walk into town, making it difficult for residents to find an on-street parking place close to their homes. This is particularly difficult for those with disabilities as there is no alternative parking on nearby streets due to current restrictions.

The situation is exacerbated by ongoing development in the area, with 43 new flats being built in the immediate vicinity, which has closed a number of existing on-street parking places for use as a loading bay. Once completed, although the flats each have one parking space allocated within the development, the problem may well worsen as it is likely that some flats will have more than 1 car per household. Therefore some residents are requesting that the area is considered for on-street residents' parking permits. In early 2020 the team responsible confirmed Belle Vue would be considered for consultation regarding on-street residents' parking permits. However the pandemic put a pause to this. I would be grateful if the portfolio holder would answer the following questions:

1. Is the council still considering new locations for on-street residents' parking permits?
2. If new areas are being considered, when will the Belle Vue area be assessed for on-street residents' parking permits?

There is always a complex balance to be struck in terms of growth and development alongside residential development and stimulating trade and commercial activity.

Parking permit schemes alone, are rarely a panacea for parking woes and are both costly, time-consuming and rigid. Our "in commission" Movement Strategy will help us to better understand the risks and rewards of future development in Shrewsbury and across Shropshire. Similarly, you may be pleased to know that our upcoming Parking and Charge review report in December 2023, identifies the need for a stronger approach in respect of protecting residents parking amenities, particularly in residential areas close to town centres and in particular, Shrewsbury. I understand from officers that the needs of Coleham are already considered amongst the strongest contenders.

Question from:	Rob Wilson	
Subject:	NWRR	
Portfolio Holder:	Dan Morris	Approved

1. On 27th September 2022 the Executive Director of Place shared a briefing note on the North West Relief Road with the Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury &

Atcham. This briefing note included information about the cost of the scheme including inflationary pressures; which was redacted in the FOI release. An email the following day suggests that following a conversation, this sensitive information could be shared with the Chair of the Shrewsbury & Atcham Conservative Association. This information was not shared with elected members. Please can you provide an explanation?

The email you refer to dated 28th September is clearly marked as Confidential. The message makes it clear that the information be kept 'Restricted'. In the context of data protection 'Restricted' means the information is limited to those who it was sent to. The financial information you refer to relates to information for the local MP to support his efforts in lobbying government for inflation adjusted financial support for the project.

2. On 6th December 2022 the Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury & Atcham arranged a meeting between Shropshire Council and the Environment Agency, and asked if members of the Shrewsbury & Atcham Conservative Association could be present. Were members of the Shrewsbury & Atcham Conservative Association present at this meeting?

A meeting did not take place 6 December due to lack of availability of Shropshire Council invited attendees. As far as we are aware this meeting did not take place on an alternative date.

3. On Friday 4th August 2023 the Portfolio Holder for Highways met with the Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury & Atcham and the Environment Agency in Westminster. Emails on Wednesday 2nd August 2023 suggest that a member of the Shrewsbury & Atcham Conservative Association was to be invited to this meeting. The CEO of the Environment Agency refused this request. Had Shropshire Council agreed to this request?

The emails you refer to were sent by the Shrewsbury MP so you will have to ask him what his intent was. We would not have been asked to approve the attendees as the meeting was not arranged by Shropshire Council. However, I can confirm that a meeting took place on the 4th August with the CEO of the EA that involved myself (Cllr Morris) as Portfolio Holder and DK as Shrewsbury MP, along with Scott Sherlock from DK's office and a secretary/PA from the EA.

Question from:	Peter Broomhall	
Subject:	Planning Applications Wem	
Portfolio Holder:	Chris Schofield	Approved

I am concerned that recent planning applications coming before Wem Town Council and Wem Rural Parish Council, have written into the applications that states contributions to Colemere Ramsar site for visitor management mitigation measures.

The planning application for 100 houses at Lowe Hill Road has been passed with outline permission. It states that contributions are to be given to the Colemere Ramsar site. The planning department state that the developments will put pressure on to the Colemere

Site from the residents of Wem. I would like to know what data they have used to come to this conclusion.

We have many recreation sites in Wem where the money could be spent for the residents of Wem. Shropshire Council own three Play areas in Wem which the town council maintains with no monetary help from Shropshire.

A lot of residents of Wem use Corbet Wood for their recreational walks, so why does the Colemere site take preference.

Wem Rural Parish Council have the Wem Moss site and also Whixall Moss which residents from Wem use and that could benefit from extra income.

The NPPF places high importance on protection of biodiversity interests and new development should minimise impacts on biodiversity. Cole Mere is both nationally and internationally designated for its nature conservation importance. Cole Mere has a Recreation Mitigation and Monitoring Strategy which has been informed by a visitor survey commissioned by the Council. Development in parts of North Shropshire have a recreational impact on Colemere . Colemere is susceptible to disturbance of habitats through trampling, as well as interference with habitat management, and also increased nitrification of habitats, primarily due to dog fouling - financial contributions are sought from residential development in the north of the county to mitigate adverse effects of increased visitor numbers on Cole Mere and maintain the integrity of this Ramsar site.

The Council uses Developer contributions (CIL and Section 106 funds) collected from new development to mitigate the impacts of development. Generally, CIL is used to mitigate the strategic and cumulative impacts resulting from a number of new developments in an area, whilst Section 106 funding is secured on a site specific basis as required and is defined for use by a legal agreement between the developer and the Council. Where collected to mitigate the impact of development in the area, these developer contributions are therefore available for use within the Wem Place Plan area.

Question from:	Rosemary Dartnall	
Subject:	NWRR	
Portfolio Holder:	Dan Morris	Approved

At the recent North Planning Committee meeting held to determine the proposed NWRR application, shortcomings in Shropshire Council's decision-making were highlighted in the proceedings. For example, there was little reference to the environmental damage that will be caused should the road ever be built. These harms include, but are not limited to, enormous construction carbon dioxide emissions which dwarf any operational benefit claimed through the road's lifetime, a longstanding concern about contamination of the aquifer beneath the construction site and how this may impact drinking water quality, as well as the felling of nine priceless veteran oak trees. It was also evident that the planned road has been designed to have a 60 mph speed limit, because, the planning officer said "people around here are used to travelling at 60 mph". Lower, more appropriate, limits were apparently not considered. A lower speed limit would have put less constraint on the carriageway form and perhaps have led to fewer trees being felled.

Please can you clarify;

- How many planning committee members, including subs have completed the carbon literacy training necessary to underpin sound place planning and evidence based decision making by the council on behalf of Shropshire residents, present and future?
- Why the NWRR is intended to have a 60 mph speed limit without having made careful consideration of lower speed limits on the grounds of safety, irretrievable environmental damage and cleaner air?

In the preparation of the Outline Business Case for the North West Relief Road, Shropshire Council was charged with meeting the business case requirements as stipulated by Department for Transport. One of the key monetizable benefits of the road, in building a positive business case, is the improvement in journey time and journey time reliability when compared with the current through town, or southern A5 options in connecting Churncote to Battlefield. In order to maximise the benefits of the road therefore, the decision was taken to pursue a 60mph carriageway on the chosen alignment, after examining many alternatives in routing and speed. These alternatives were fully laid out in the Planning Committee report published for the 31st Oct Northern Planning Committee and were previously endorsed by Full Council on 16th May 2019 – “Shrewsbury North West Relief Road – DfT Programme Entry”

The current alignment, by design, now avoids as many sensitive ecological areas as possible, including within the constraints of the location of the STW facility on the River Severn, and the existing housing development at Dalton Drive. Where unavoidable clashes have occurred, these are to be managed responsibly and comprehensively with a mitigation and compensation strategy that has now been accepted by the Local Planning Authority.

Further to the motion agreed by Council in September 2021, to “Develop Climate Emergency mitigation training for all teams across the council, including cabinet and other members”, Cabinet and members of the Executive Management Team completed accredited Carbon Literacy Training in January 2022 and the Council was subsequently accredited as a Carbon Literate Organisation to the Bronze level in April 2022 <https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2022/04/training-bronze-level-climate-literacy-status/>

During 2022-23, the Council has trained 3 staff as internal Carbon Literacy trainers and 3 further cohorts of staff and senior managers (amounting to 27 staff in all) have now completed carbon literacy training. Training for a further 15 staff will be provided during November / December and further training is being arranged specifically for staff involved in the commissioning of external suppliers in early 2024 to help address other aspects of the motion agreed in September 2021. This has already helped to generate more widespread understanding and ownership of the causes of climate change across the whole council, as well as furnishing key decision makers with appropriate knowledge and awareness. Carbon literacy training has not yet been offered to other members, including planning committee members, but this is planned during 2024. It is understood that some members, including some planning committee members, are already accredited as carbon literate, although this is not a requirement to sit on planning committee.

Question from:	Kevin Pardy
Subject:	SEND Discretionary School Transport
Portfolio Holder:	Kirstie Hurst-Knight Approved

Shropshire Council have published an "Update on SEND discretionary school transport".

"Changes include new ways to increase independence for children, young people and families, whilst balancing the costs to Shropshire Council taxpayers, including:

- Independent Travel Training, where the student is provided with support to access public transport or walk/cycle helping them to gain greater independence.
- Personal Transport Budgets where parents/carers can take control of providing transport for their child, supported by a financial payment from the council.
- Closer working with schools to consider peers sharing where possible.
- Parents' travelling expenses."

My question is:

- i) In what form will students receive "Travel Training"?

Enable Shropshire will be delivering the training and have successfully delivered several Travel Training Placements on behalf of Passenger Transport for Shropshire pupils and students across the County, for a number of years. In addition Enable provide this offer commercially to other Local Authorities. Enable will organise the training through liaison with the parents/carers and meeting with the student themselves and discussing a training programme that reflects their individual needs. The training itself will be in how to access the appropriate public transport network for attending their education setting, whilst at the same time providing those skills for the young person to access public transport independently beyond those settings. We are also exploring how we can extend this offer through the education provision attended by the young person, as part of their preparation for adulthood offer.

- ii) How is the new policy and changes being communicated and actioned with parents?.

Travel Training is an option that we have offered for a number of years to all parents/carers where it is a practical alternative to travelling on a taxi or shared vehicle. We are keen to expand this offer as we believe it has strong benefits to the young person developing confidence and independence, as they prepare for adulthood.

- iii) Are parents only eligible if a student is attending school full time?

The policy is full time attendance based on the start and end of the school day, but in liaison with our SEND team we do look at individuals on a case by case basis.

iv) How does it work if a student is on a reduced timetable?

As above we will follow our policy, but will explore this on a case by case basis.

Question from:	Andrew Sherrington	
Subject:	Fix My Street	
Portfolio Holder:	Dan Morris	Approved

There is a widespread perception that the distribution of road repair spending is unfair, and that items have to be repeatedly submitted to "Fix My Street" before they can get done. To determine if this is correct, I would ask:

What is the end-to-end process for the receipt of road repair requests, the collation and prioritisation of requests, instruction to contractors and monitoring of the work done? This should include how the process is controlled, by whom? What reporting measures are used to understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the process? How is a fair distribution of spending ensured?

Shropshire Council has a schedule of routine highway inspection, carried out by qualified highway inspections who will identify safety issues that require repair. Some issues are reported to Shropshire Council via one of the many reporting routes; all of these are captured within our management system and allocated to the appropriate Highways Technician for follow up action if required.

We currently have a backlog of defects, which is the case for the vast majority of highway authorities across the country. However, through a range of service improvements and efficiencies we have seen our defect backlog fall considerably since the start of the year.

In term of larger carriageway repairs and schemes, these are subject to a data-led process which draws together intelligence on network condition , customer enquiries and reactive defects recorded on the link of carriageway. This intelligence is analysed to determine a priority programme of maintenance, which is validated by area teams. This structured process for decision making follows the current best practice called Asset Management, which is endorsed by the Department for Transport. The Council's agreed Highways Asset Management Policy is publicly available on the Council's website.