

17 January 2024  
PUBLIC QUESTIONS

<b>Question from:</b>	Mike Sargeant	
<b>Subject:</b>	Complaints re Council's Planning Function	
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Chris Schofield	Approved
<p>I would like to raise an issue to be asked as a question at the meeting on the 17 January 2024 , How many complaints have been made by members of the public about the council's planning function in each of the last five years? How many of these have been upheld and how many are still outstanding, or have been ignored?.</p> <p>Why when an official complaint lodged with the council concerning the breaking of planning conditions, landscape and ecology plans accepted by the council that are not factually correct, the council signing off a lighting plan to protect Bats when stated in the lighting plan the company writing it were not informed of any wildlife on the development site, the breaking of planning conditions, all contained in written format. Why do the council choose to ignore these facts?.</p> <p>Why when it is their statutory duties under the NERC act of 2006 do they ignore their responsibilities towards the ecology and the biodiversity of a development site, that they are responsible to protect, also ignoring BS 5837:2012, BS 42020:2013 that are there to protect the ecology and again biodiversity of a development site. What is Shropshire councils excuse?</p> <p>Thank you for your question. There have been 413 complaints in the last five years, of which a number of these will be about the same site. The number upheld was 31, in addition to 21 being partially upheld. There are 6 currently outstanding.</p> <p>The Council takes its duties and legal responsibilities regarding ecology matters seriously. The particular case Mr Sargent refers to has been fully assessed by the Council and the Council does not consider it has breached the NERC Act 2006. British Standards are for applicants to comply with voluntarily. They are not legal requirements.</p>		

<b>Question from:</b>	Jamie Russell	
<b>Subject:</b>	NWRR	
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Dan Morris	Approved
<p>In an article published in the <a href="#">Shropshire Star</a> on 28 November 2023, Councillor Dan Morris was quoted as saying: <i>"The Environment Agency has stated that any risk to the drinking water for the town would be minimal"</i>.</p> <p>This is inaccurate. In actual fact the Environment Agency has repeatedly stated the opposite view in a series of letters in May, July and December 2023.</p> <p>For instance, in the letter to the council dated 12 December 2023 the agency states: <i>"There is a <u>significant risk</u> of impact upon the water supply at this location, based on the</i></p>		

*route and design the applicant has chosen to pursue.*" (emphasis added). At no point does the letter use the word "minimal".

I note that the Environment Agency recently said that it believes its views as a statutory government body have been misrepresented by the council.

In light of that, does Councillor Morris believe he misrepresented the agency's views in November when he said the EA has stated that any risk to the drinking water would be minimal?

If he believes his statement is accurate, please can he provide evidence of where and when the EA said this. If he did misrepresent their views, please can he apologise and correct the public record.

The Council, as Local Planning Authority recommended to Committee in October 2023 approval of the NWRR application subject to satisfactory section 106 agreements and Planning Conditions. In doing so it has taken this view supported by independent external review of the planning responses by all statutory bodies, including Environment Agency, and Severn Trent Water Ltd.

Initial risk assessments by the applicant and statutory bodies were considered as part of this review, and in recommending conditions to address identified and quantified risks, this will ensure that the potential impact of the NWRR project on drinking water is proactively managed to a minimal level, or less, with the condition requirements ensuring this to be agreed by all parties before construction commences. So even if the EA didn't say those precise words, the implication from what was said by all parties is fully in accord with the assessment of the situation, eg the risk is minimal.

<b>Question from:</b>	David Kilby	
<b>Subject:</b>	Sports Village	
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Robert Macey	Approved
Do members agree it would be foolhardy to invest £28 Million for the provision of a pool whilst stating the Sports Village' is not financially viable' and is under used?		
<b>No. The report identifies and addresses these points specifically.</b>		
Before investing £28 Million of public funds at the village, do SC need to determine the reasons for these failures to see if there has been a history of poor governance, management and maintenance at the Quarry and Sports Village?		
The council lays out it reasons for the investment within the report obviously these take account of the current contractual arrangements and has every confidence in the operator.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ SC has compensated the operator for loss of revenue, while the Quarry Swimming facility has been closed.</li><li>➤ The outdoor sports pitches at Sundorne Village, are a poor standard.</li><li>➤ The cycle track is a safety concern.</li><li>➤ The outdoor tennis courts, play area and basketball area are in a poor state.</li></ul>		

Reasons why user numbers are lower than one would expect for a flagship facility of this kind.

If poor governance, management and maintenance are affecting the efficiency of these two facilities, is it time for SC look at their own management of these facilities, including their choice of operators, and maintenance procedures?

**SSV forms part of a wider contract that will be re-tendered at the end of the current contract period in 2027.**

SPFA believe SC should explore a dual use facility, with alternate partners, an alternate site and a different operating model, based at Meole Brace/ Priory School sites.

SPFA believe that whilst there is a proven need to replace the existing Quarry Pool, there is not a proven need to spend large amounts of money (approx. £10 million) on fitness facilities, nowhere in your plan is there any mention of existing providers, locations, prices etc.

<b>Question from:</b>	Frank Oldaker	
<b>Subject:</b>	NWRR Planning	
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Chris Schofield	Approved

In an exchange of emails between the case officer and Severn Trent last December, about planning conditions to be attached to the planning permission for the NWRR, the case officer used the expression "time is of the essence". This expression implies there is a legal justification behind not taking whatever time is necessary to ensure that everything possible is done to ensure the safety of our water supplies. To make rushing to determination of the application more important is completely unacceptable.

So will the Cabinet please instruct the council officers dealing with this vital issue, of which there is no known equivalent precedent in the UK, to take as long as is required to formulate conditions that all parties agree do truly minimise the risk of contamination of the water sources.

**Thank you for your question.**

**The term used by the case officer is to ensure that officers have all the information relating to conditions as soon as possible, so that they can understand whether there are outstanding matters that require further discussion with consultees.**

**Major applications such as this (EIA development) are required by government to be determined within 16 weeks. This application has been with the local planning authority for three years to be determined, which demonstrates that full consideration has been given to all environmental matters. It most certainly has not been rushed.**