

Member Questions
Council 27 February 2025

Question from Councillor Simon Harris

I would like to congratulate the Portfolio Holder for obtaining extra funding to assist with caring for Shropshire's rough sleepers this winter.

However, I would be grateful for some clarity when it comes to reporting numbers as the media, and even the Council Comms team, seem to conflate 'homelessness' and 'rough sleeping' – so as at 31 December 2024:

1. How many individual adults are registered on Homepoint ie looking for Council supported accommodation.
2. Within this number – how many individual adults are classified as 'Homeless' ie living in temporary Council provided accommodation such as hostels, B&Bs, hotels, etc.
3. How many individual adults are considered as 'rough sleeping' ie not having any shelter overnight.

I would be grateful if the Portfolio Holder would also explain why the 'Severe Weather Emergency Protocol' only kicks in at zero C, when it is still bitterly cold at say 5degrees C; furthermore could the Protocol kick in at times of heavy ie Storm, rain?

Response from Councillor Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets

1. *How many individual adults are registered on Homepoint ie, looking for Council supported accommodation.*

We cannot report individual adults as we record households. The data below are the number of household's not individual people. It is also worth mentioning that Social Housing is not solely Council housing and a number of registered providers (housing associations) operate stock within the Shropshire area.

As of 01.01.2025 the numbers are below – this information is updated monthly and published on the HomePoint website – it can be found here: [SHP Housing Fact Sheet.pdf](#)

The criteria for banding can be found in the allocations policy here - [Microsoft Word - Revised Housing Allocations Policy and Scheme March 2023](#) It is worth noting that bands 1A-5 are for people in need, those in bands 6 or 7 either have no local connection or have the financial means above the threshold meaning we believe they can source their own solution.

Band 1A	206	Total: Bands 1A – 5 = 3,325
Band 2	263	
Band 3	803	
Band 4	1,384	
Band 5	669	
Band 6	2,384	
Band 7	2,718	
TOTAL:	8,427	

2. *Within this number – how may individual adults are classified as ‘Homeless’ ie living in temporary Council provided accommodation such as hostels, B&Bs, hotels, etc.*

We cannot report individuals as we report in households. The details below are the number of people in temporary accommodation (broken down by self-contained units or B&B placements).

As of 03.01.2025 we had 140 households in temporary accommodation units and 93 in B&B provision. Most of the households in B&B are 1 or 2 person households (adults) and the majority of households in temporary accommodation units are families.

We opened the Tannery scheme in January and are slowly building that to capacity. This scheme has capacity for 60 for single adults so will significantly reduce our B&B numbers over the next few weeks. Further to the Tannery we also have Coton Hill House (25 bedspaces), Parish Rooms (12 bedspaces) and 70 Castle Foregate (10 bedspaces) coming online within the next 6 months which will also reduce our B&B numbers.

Data on the numbers of households Local Authorities have in temporary accommodation can be found here – [Tables on homelessness - GOV.UK](#)

3. *How many individual adults are considered as ‘rough sleeping’ ie not having any shelter overnight.*

All local authorities must complete an estimate of their rough sleeper numbers in November of each year. This involves teams physically being out over night to ‘count’ the number of people bedded down. This number is used to understand whether areas have an increase / decrease in numbers annually. In November 2024 Shropshire’s rough sleeper estimate was: 21 individuals.

However, the rough sleeper team meet with partners weekly to understand the number of individuals known to be rough sleeping weekly. As of 31.12.2024 there were 18 known individuals sleeping rough in Shropshire.

The data for the annual rough sleeper estimate across all Local Authorities can be found here – [Tables on rough sleeping - GOV.UK](#)

4. *I would be grateful if the Portfolio Holder would also explain why the 'Severe Weather Emergency Protocol' only kicks in at zero C, when it is still bitterly cold at say 5degrees C; furthermore, could the Protocol kick in at times of heavy ie Storm, rain?*

The definition of Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is defined by the government. It is generally determined to be a locally agreed procedure, to minimise harm or death to anyone who might be sleeping rough in severe weather, through the provision of emergency accommodation. Although we talk about it a lot during winter due to the cold weather alerts, we have, SWEP is in place all year round and is activated during extreme hot weather (heatwaves), flooding and storms. Shropshire does not just operate SWEP during cold weather. It is also relevant to note that SWEP may be called in some areas of the UK and not in others due to differing elements.

Currently Shropshire Council's Rough Sleeper Team are operating a nightly winter provision. This is being supported by Shrewsbury Ark who we are funding via winter pressures funding we received from government, to utilise their building. This means we can offer nightly shelter to any verified rough sleepers up until end March 2025. The Council rough sleeper team is leading on this and being supported by partners such as Shrewsbury Ark and RESET. To date we have managed to rehouse 2 rough sleepers via this provision as we were able to provide more intense support than normal. On average we are having 10+ individuals access this every night and support provided is a bed, warm food and drinks, access to showers / washing facilities and support to talk through any issues and / or housing support. More information can be found here – [Council and The Shrewsbury Ark extend winter service for homeless people thanks to additional funding - Shropshire Council Newsroom](#)

SWEP is manned on a voluntary basis and support is provided by several other housing staff and partners. The team would always welcome volunteers from elected members if people wish to assist. If anyone is interested, please contact the team via rsreferral@shropshire.gov.uk

Question from Councillor Rob Wilson

Shelton Road, in the vicinity of the busy pedestrian crossing, was repaired on the evening of Monday 13th January with an emergency road closure. A number of defects were not repaired, and the work that was carried out failed within a few days. Since then, the road has deteriorated further making it dangerous for all road users. Despite me trying to seek updates from officers in highways and the portfolio holder, none have been received. Residents are rightly frustrated that over a month ago repairs were deemed urgent, but now, with the road in a worse state, nothing is being done. Surely this section of road should now be fully resurfaced?

Response from Councillor Dan Morris, Portfolio Holder for Highways

The carriageway surface in the vicinity of the crossing on Shelton Road, Shrewsbury is experiencing rapid deterioration. The affected area once had a high-friction surface which can sometimes accelerate deterioration, due to the additional pressure this applies to the carriageway.

Any intervention in the area has been a temporary risk-based intervention to reduce risk to the public. The failure in this area has meant achieving any even a temporary repair very difficult. This location is being regularly monitored and has been swept to help reduce the amount of loose material at this location.

I am delighted to confirm that the entire crossing has been scoped and will feature in the forthcoming 25/26 Highways Capital Program, with the earliest start date possible, likely to be aligned with a school holiday.

Question from Councillor Roy Aldcroft

There are 3 trailers which have been abandoned 2 on the A53 between Shawbury and Market Drayton and 1 Between Tern Hill and the Bletchley By pass.

Police and Environment Agency were supposed to be investigating the issue as a criminal act by organised crime gangs.

It has got to be getting on for 8 months now and still they are there!!!

The tyres are nearly flat, bits of the trailers are falling apart and whatever rubbish inside is a potential hazard.

With these trailers parked up in regularly used HGV rest spots, it is preventing HGV drivers from taking their legal break.

All of these trailers have been vandalised, some with panels hanging off, if they become detached in heavy winds presenting a hazard to other road users.

Can I have an assurance from the Portfolio Holder that this issue is being dealt with?

Response from Councillor Dan Morris, Portfolio Holder for Highways

We are aware of the three abandoned trailers located on the A53 between Shawbury and Market Drayton, and on the stretch between Tern Hill and the Bletchley By-pass. These trailers have been under investigation by West Mercia Police and the Environment Agency as part of a criminal act by organised crime gangs.

We are currently taking legal advice on our options, including the cost of removal, which could be as much as £10,000 per trailer. There is one owner who has acknowledged ownership but has informed the Environment Agency that he cannot afford to collect it and does not want it back. The remaining trailers belong to the gang responsible for abandoning them.

The investigation by the Police and Environment Agency is now complete. We are monitoring the situation, and we are working to see if we can get them emptied before moving them.

Thank you for bringing this to our attention, and we will continue to pursue a resolution.

Question from Councillor Pam Moseley

Planning consent for the housing development at Weir Hill was granted in August 2018, including a section 106 agreement for a new road layout at Belvidere Road/rail bridge, to mitigate for the anticipated additional traffic generated. After that, I discussed options with the highway officer responsible, including a draft consultation with residents in October 2021. A different highway engineer was then assigned to the scheme in 2022. A “temporary” barrier and stop line were installed in early 2020 and these remain in place, 5 years later.

In late 2024 – over six years since grant of planning consent - frustrated by the lack of progress, I asked the Chief Executive to investigate, subsequently meeting with the then Director of Place and highway engineer, who began discussions with Network Rail, but without resolution. Both then left the authority with little notice. In early January, I sought to find out who is now responsible but have yet to be informed.

£250k was allocated to this scheme. Over £35,000 has already been spent on fees, and construction costs have increased significantly during this period. I am very concerned that improvements here will not be viable, especially as there is no agreed scheme.

Traffic here has increased because of the Weir Hill development, and this heavily used bridge, especially by school children walking to several local schools, needs to be made safer. Local residents both need and deserve improvements.

Can the portfolio holder please explain what is happening?

Response from Councillor Chris Schofield, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

We understand the frustration caused by delays and share your concerns about traffic management and pedestrian safety. The officer leading on this project has recently left the authority and all projects are reviewed. The above scheme involves work on a Network Rail Asset and all works require their approval. Despite engagement starting in late 2022, progress has been difficult and additional requirements have been introduced. Network Rail have mandated increasing the bridge parapet height as part of their suicide prevention strategy, which was not part of the original agreement and has complicated matters. In September 2024, our consultant, WSP, was ready to proceed with the footway widening and priority traffic system but did not receive the necessary instructions to proceed, leaving the project in limbo.

There are a number of Key Risks which have been identified, namely Construction Risks, Liability Issues which need to be understood fully. At this stage, we are currently reviewing these risks and solutions and we will be providing an update as soon as possible.

We appreciate your patience and your ongoing advocacy for this issue. While the complexities have caused delays, we are committed to prioritising pedestrian safety and addressing traffic concerns.

Question from Councillor Rosemary Dartnall

A new Toucan crossing was installed, at pace, on Oteley Road. Without local members' knowledge there was no public consultation. There remain longstanding needs for safe crossings in residential areas nearby. The request came from the police, concerned for the safety of those leaving Croud Meadow after football matches.

The new crossing has been badly implemented. In itself creating two serious public hazards;

- N eastbound cyclists deathtrap. The central island takes up 3m of road width causing car drivers to veer to the left at exactly where cyclists are directed onto the carriageway. The road here is too narrow to safely accommodate cars, buses and trucks as well as cyclists.
- The mass exodus at match end causes a queue waiting to use the new crossing. When the light is green a large swathe of people fill the central island to wait for the red light to change green on the other carriageway so they can cross the north section. This leaves a swathe of people behind, on the road, presenting another danger. The lights on each side of the road must

be co-ordinated to work together so that people can cross safely and move safely away from the crossing.

The cyclist danger (first reported on 4 December) but mitigations have not worked. This is an urgent matter, entirely created by Highways actions. Can the Portfolio Holder please acknowledge this huge error and confirm what urgent action will be taken and when?

Response from Councillor Dan Morris, Portfolio Holder for Highways

We would like to apologise to the Local Members for the area if they feel insufficient consultation was undertaken in relation to the installation of the crossing, their comments are noted. Statutory consultation under the Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 was undertaken between the 18th July 2024 and 8th August 2024 to give notice of the proposed crossing, only representations from West Mercia Police was received

In relation to the concerns raised regarding cycle safety, we are looking to implement additional measures to address these concerns. Works will be scheduled at the earliest opportunity; we do not currently have a start date for completion but Shropshire Council officers are happy to keep Cllr Dartnall and the other Local Members updated as appropriate.

In relation to the use of the crossing following a football match, the sequencing and the timing of the crossing will be reviewed and adjusted as appropriate, the comments regarding timing are noted and we will continue to monitor this over the coming weeks, and make any necessary changes that are deemed appropriate.

Question from Councillor David Vasmer

Recent press stories state that the council shared excerpts from the Full Business Case on the North West Relief Road with external stakeholders - including Jo Williams, CEO of the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust. This occurred prior to these stakeholders announcing their support for the scheme in January 2025.

Councillor Dan Morris told Highways Magazine that "these stakeholders have been shown excerpts from the traffic collision and journey-time modelling that has been undertaken as part of the FBC". The story, dated 24 January, was headlined "Council gains stakeholder support for road scheme using 'confidential data'".

Please can the council:

1. Explain why "confidential" data from the Full Business Case was shared with external stakeholders before it has been seen by the Northern Planning Committee, full council, or the public.

2. Share this data immediately with councillors and the public via the planning portal.
3. Explain what legal advice it has been given around this decision to share excerpts from the FBC.

Response from Councillor Dan Morris, Portfolio Holder for Highways

Firstly, I want to be clear that the Council discusses a range of issues with various stakeholders throughout any given year. It would frankly be bizarre if we had not discussed something as important as the NWRR with different organisations such as the NHS trust and Fire Service.

The data recently discussed with stakeholders around traffic modelling, was based on the original information supporting the NWRR full planning application. This information has been in the public domain since 2021, and is fully aligned with the information considered by Northern Planning Committee. The Full Business Case preparation process is a requirement of the DfT only (as opposed to the planning process) as a main funder for the road. In all cases on schemes such as this, it is only then submitted for their approval in line with DfT guidance, following the planning decision.

The Council has now published the draft Full Business Case for the NWRR, and expects to be submitting it formally to DfT following Full Council approval to do so in due course