

## **CABINET 11 JUNE 2025**

### **RESPONSES TO PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

The recording of the meeting is available to view from here: [Cabinet - Wednesday, 11th June, 2025 10.30 am](#)

#### **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

##### **1 Mike Streetly**

Would the council please set out the steps and timescales required for cancelling the NWRR project?

##### **Response : The Leader (on behalf of Cllr David Vasmer, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment**

The Council is currently reviewing the North West Relief Road project. In order to protect the financial interests of the Council, any decision on the project's any decision on the project will need to be fully assessed and made in close liaison with those external funders involved. As such, and without this information in full, it would be unwise to commit to a formal position at this stage.

##### **2 Graham Betts**

The Cabinet meeting of 5 March 2025 responded to my public question. However, the content was inadequate and I still have not received the information requested under RFI#6141 made on 16 January 2024. The response also fails to answer the specific points I raised.

Planning consents, 13/03285/FUL and 13/03534/OUT, for Darwin's Walk and Bowbrook Meadows in Shrewsbury clearly state in section 6.9.1 that £3,595,554 had been raised for local infrastructure projects. This represents an average contribution of £6621 from each house purchase. The information provided only accounts for £1,397,373. No other information or reply accounts for the missing sum of £2,198,181 and the claim by the Cabinet that my request has been serviced is untrue.

Can Shropshire Council, via its Cabinet, please provide the missing information and respond to my questions in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Nolan principles of public life?

## Response – Cllr David Walker, Portfolio Holder for Planning

Paragraphs 6.9.1 and 6.9.2 of the Committee report referred to in the question detail the combined infrastructure needs of two applications 13/03285/FUL and 13/03534/OUT. In total these two proposals deliver 533 dwellings.

For the avoidance of any doubt 6.9.1 and 6.9.2 state:

*“Concerns raised by a number of members of the community that local infrastructure cannot support the proposed increase in dwellings are noted. In accordance with Policies CS2 and CS9 and the Councils Developer Contributions SPD, a financial contribution totalling £3,241,154 (including Section 278 works) with the overall contribution being £3,595,554 when the CIL Neighbourhood Fund at 15% and administration at 5% are added. The infrastructure costs package is made up of: -*

- Contribution to Strategic Road Network - £759,850*
- Contribution to town-wide highways network and sustainable transport £626,250*
- Contribution to local road network - £151,000*
- Subsidy to local bus service - £519,480*
- Community facilities (Education contribution and on site play provision) £1,184,574*
- Total - £3,241,154*

***The infrastructure contributions will be provided through a combination of CIL payments, S106 Agreement, S278 highway works and land (where this is being provided for additional community/recreation facilities at the request of the Council rather than as an ‘on-site design’ requirement - amenity open space and natural/semi-natural open space provided as part of the development’s ‘on-site design’ requirements, and the costs of their management/maintenance, are separate and additional).” (my emphasis)***

The following table provides the total amounts of developer contribution collected from the two linked schemes available to the Council to fund local infrastructure

<i>Application</i>	<i>Total S106* (rounded)</i>	<i>Total CIL available for infrastructure** (rounded)</i>	<i>Total Developer Contributions available for use by SC in Infrastructure (rounded)</i>
<i>13/03285/FUL</i>	<i>£310,540</i>	<i>£431,559</i>	<i>£742,099</i>
<i>13/03534/OUT / 14/03844/REM</i>	<i>£1,086,833</i>	<i>£1,520,719</i>	<i>£2,607,552</i>
			<b><i>£3,349,651</i></b>

*\*Used for Education, Bus Service Provision, Local Highway and footway Improvements*

*\*\* Does not include the Neighbourhood Fund element (15% which goes to the Town Council) and the 5% admin*

For those items identified in paragraph 6.9.1 of the Committee Report, and not included for total funding via the S106 agreement, the expectation was that the CIL would provide the funding.

### **3 John Palmer**

What have been the costs of owning Shirehall in 2025, month-by-month, and how much has been budgeted to spend on anything associated with the dilapidating monolith until 31 March 2026?

Why has the land's potential development for new housing by a purchasing developer, such a fertile and urgent Government priority, not been mentioned publicly as the incoming Cabinet's plan, creating much-needed new homes for Shrewsbury against a backdrop of a crashed Local Plan?

Please don't let officers persuade you that these costs cannot be revealed without an FOI request, when refreshed openness and transparency for residents is your welcoming public political mantra.

Potentially answering "We know exactly, but it's commercially sensitive, affected by ongoing site disposal negotiations", may indicate "It's a lot, and we're ashamed to admit it publicly"? Potentially answering "We don't know, and don't have the time to calculate it", may indicate an eyes-off-the-ball complacency to inherited wasteful expenditure?

When will Cabinet instruct officers urgently to limit this pointless waste of money and bring forward a paper for decision-making by Cabinet and then Full Council, or announce a sale of the land to developers?

### **Response – Cllr Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance**

The budgeted saving associated with the Shirehall shown in budget papers is £1.3 million for 2025/26 but the target is to deliver an in-year saving of £1,005,540. The difference between these figures of just around £300,000 reflects the residual spend over the year under previous plans.

The future of this building and the site is, together with many others, being re-examined. The decant activity has taken much longer than I expected it to be and is now in its final phase with the remaining tenants relocating and building being cleared of furniture and equipment. The second stage will be the decommissioning of the building including shutting down and draining systems. Stage one and two I am at present being told will conclude this calendar year.

The previous administration had planned a stage three with that programme running into 2026 for marketing activity. We have been in power for just 20 days, and much work has and is taking place so we can fully understand how to take many projects forward.

Note, I have not used words like commercially sensitive. A survey of the building was previously commissioned, and I would hope to make informed comments about this and the findings in the coming weeks. I do believe in sharing as much information as possible and to live up to the claim of being a more transparent and open council.

## **MEMBER QUESTIONS**

### **1 Cllr Kate Halliday**

On 16th April 2025 the Supreme Court unanimously agreed that the terms 'man' 'woman' and 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 (EA2010) refer to biological sex. Holding a Gender Recognition Certificate does not change sex for the purposes of the EA2010. The ruling protects single sex spaces and services for women and girls giving utmost clarity that women's rights must be protected in law. It also highlights the continued protection for trans people under EA2010. Failure to adhere to the law puts the council at risk of being sued for discrimination. Does the new Administration welcome the clarity in law that the Supreme Court ruling brings, and will it be reviewing the council's policies, procedures, guidance and training materials, including a review of the services it runs and commissions, to ensure that it complies with the ruling?

### **Response – Leader**

Whilst the ruling itself provides clarity, which is always to be welcomed, The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) then released interim non statutory advice about how to interpret the ruling.

Because the EHRC advice was a) interim and b) non-statutory, the current national position, and that of the new administration is therefore to await next steps by the EHRC and by the Women and Equalities Committee

### **2 Cllr Julian Dean**

In June 2022 Shropshire Cabinet committed to working towards a 20mph scheme within the divisions of Porthill and Copthorne. Repeated efforts by councillors to see this implemented resulted in, on the one hand, a recognition of the case for this to also include new pedestrian crossings on the Copthorne Road and The Mount, but, on the other hand, no progress towards implementation despite money being allocated. Staffing changes and repeated redesigns resulted in delays and, most probably, wasted financial resources.

Can cabinet members update the community as to an expected timetable for new pedestrian crossings and for 20mph limits on residential streets in the area? Can they further provide reassurance as to how similar schemes will be better managed from now on, such that councillors can track progress.

**Response: Cllr Rob Wilson, Portfolio Holder Transport & Economic Growth**

Our manifesto at the council elections said that we would “Introduce 20mph speed limits where there is the support of the parish council and local councillor.” This follows the successful approach taken by the Liberal Democrat/Green coalition at Oxfordshire County Council over the last four years. The evidence there and elsewhere shows that there is a reduction not only in collisions and the number of people killed and seriously injured, but savings on car insurance premiums too.

We have held initial discussions with Council officers about reviewing Shropshire Council’s policy on the use of 20mph speed limits. The hope is that this will make the process for implementation simpler and more cost effective. We will share more details about how this review will impact existing proposals for 20mph schemes as soon as possible. In Shrewsbury, this will bring council policy in line with the Movement and Public Space Strategy which suggests that “most residential roads across Shrewsbury with a current speed limit of 30mph would be changed to a speed limit of 20mph, though some main roads could be exempt from this speed limit and remain at higher speed limits, where required.”

On your second point. Pedestrian crossings are vital pieces of road infrastructure, and any delays in installation are very frustrating. The council is currently in the process of recruiting a new Active Travel Manager, and improving the process for moving forward the installation of pedestrian crossings where they are needed across the county will be one of the first items on my agenda with the successful candidate.

**3 Cllr Duncan Kerr**

The Green Group on SUC proposed to Council that a waste minimisation strategy be approved in 2021 pointing out that at the at time Shropshire had the highest level of household waste arisings per house in mainland England. This was rejected by the Conservative group. We tried again in December 2023 and this time then then Portfolio-holder agreed to produce a strategy by the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 and that was the unanimous resolution of Council.

A draft strategy was produced, consulted on and reported to, and agreed by, the scrutiny committee but was never tabled before Council for approval. Without an

approved strategy we have seen measures such as a booking system for the tip introduced and then rescinded and a badly implemented charging regime for green waste which hasn't met its targets. Both of these very public failings harm our ability to curb household waste arisings and underscore the need for a properly research and documented strategy to support evidenced-based decision-making.

With the need to establish weekly food waste collections from April 2026 the need for this strategy is becoming ever more critical so will the Cabinet commit to bringing the completed strategy for approval at the next Council meeting?

### **Response: The Leader (on behalf of Cllr David Vasmer, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment**

Thank you for your question; I can confirm that a Waste Prevention Strategy report went before Council and was approved on 27th Feb 2025. We are currently formatting the Strategy which will soon be on the webpages but in the meantime the details can be found on the councils committee papers for February 2025.

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s39997/Waste%20Prevention%20Strategy-26072024%200948.pdf>

In relation to food waste, we are currently modelling several options and further details will be presented to cabinet later in the year once we also have a confirmed budget position from government.

### **4 Cllr Rosemary Dartnall**

We all know Shropshire roads are in poor condition. The council's previous Conservative administration admitted recently that Government investment to bring our roads up to an acceptable standard was short by at least £10m per annum.

A recent local authority study commissioned by Citroen UK found Shropshire pothole repairs were the second most expensive, second only to the Shetland Isles. It's easy to see why islands might face high maintenance costs but not so easy to explain the Shropshire anomaly. It's likely the survey a very simple calculation, but it does indicate we have a worryingly high level of cost combined with a road network in serious decline.

Fortunately, the Labour Government has substantially increased our pothole fund from around £9 m per annum to £33.7 m in the current year, granted expressly to bring our road network up to standard. The Government has made it clear that to retain this preferential level of funding, all local authorities must provide evidence of improved maintenance programmes. The first requirement is to publish criteria online by 30 June including the condition of our roads, how many potholes are being repaired and at what cost. In October more stringent requirements must be fulfilled.

If we do not improve adequately, we will lose funding. Is Shropshire Council Highways changing how it works and is it on track to demonstrate the Government's investment in our roads is being spent wisely for the benefit of all in who live in and visit Shropshire?

**Response: The Leader (on behalf of Cllr David Vasmer, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment**

The new administration has made it clear that dealing with the state of our roads is one of our top priorities. One of our first actions was to increase the number of in-house teams dealing with potholes. There are no quick fixes, but addressing this issue is of the highest importance to our residents.

The publication referenced was published during the pre-election period, this limited the Council's ability to evaluate and challenge the data used for this article. The reference to additional funding from circa £9m to £33m not quite as good as it first seems, the reality is that funding has only been increased by around £9m this year, when base budgets and year on year government support is taken into consideration.

Significant work has been carried out to develop and optimise the Council's service offer to drive down cost and improve efficiency, which culminated in two national awards in 2024. The cost of pothole repair in Shropshire has consistently been between £80-£110 for the last 2 years.

With regards to the additional funding from Central Government , whilst this is a step in the right direction - it does nothing this address underinvestment over the past decade and fundamentally the poor condition of the network, or the backlog of urgent and necessary maintenance repairs. The county's roads require considerable extra investment to keep our roads safe and serviceable and to prevent additional potholes forming.

It is also worth adding that the Council is responding to the call for data, which it is providing to ensure increased levels of investment are sustained from government in future, provided of course spending reviews produce positive financial support for local authorities.

## **5. Cllr Andy Boddington**

There is growing interest in using ANPR to prevent driving offences which disturb neighbourhoods and reduce safety of pedestrians and other vehicles.

Lower Corve Street in Ludlow is an example of where we have an urgent need to prevent through traffic. Its use as shortcut has become intolerable with a constant stream of vehicles entering and exiting the access only road. In recent weeks two cars have been written off and many more have been damaged in recent years. Several solutions to this have been explored over the years but none implemented. The view of most people in the community is that only ANPR will check the through traffic and ensure drivers use more suitable (and only slightly longer) roads.<sup>1)</sup> What experience



does the council have of using ANPR? 2) Has its use proved effective and are there lessons for rollout elsewhere? 3) What policies or guidelines does the council have for installing ANPR across the county where it will prove beneficial? 4) Give the difficulties faced by residents could options for Lower Corve Street be looked at with a matter of urgency?

**Response: Cllr Rob Wilson, Portfolio Holder Transport & Economic Growth**

The enforcement of moving traffic offences using ANPR cameras has been commonplace in London for some time under Part 6 of the 2004 Traffic Management Act. Since May 2022 Local Authorities outside of London have been able to apply for those same powers. Shropshire Council was granted those powers in July 2023. To date, those powers have only been used in Shropshire to enforce the six trial camera controlled School Streets across the county. We will be reviewing what has been learnt from this programme, and assess how Shropshire Council could make further use of these “moving traffic offence” powers in the fullness of time. Meanwhile, Council officers are compiling a draft list of potential locations, and I will ask for Lower Corve Street in Ludlow to be added to this list.