



Cabinet 10 June 2026

Item

Public

Hills Ford Rally

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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr David Vasmer	

1. Synopsis

Cheltenham Motor Club (CMC) has applied for Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) for the Hills Ford Stages Rally. As the CMC have satisfied the necessary statutory criteria required under the relevant legislation, the Council as the Highways Authority has no operational objections to the making of the Motor Race order and the TTRO. However, significant public interest continues to develop. Due to this high community and reputational sensitivity, and in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the decision to authorise the TTRO has been referred to Cabinet.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The proposed motorsport event would comprise a ceremonial opening within Shrewsbury town centre on Saturday 19 September 2026 and a five-stage closed-road rally within southern Shropshire on Sunday 20 September 2026.

2.2 The event would operate under a Motorsport UK (MSUK) permit and within the statutory framework established for closed-road motorsport events. However, the making of the associated Motor Race Order and TTROs remains a discretionary decision for the Highway Authority.

2.3 Consultation undertaken by the organiser and subsequent representations received have raised concerns regarding environmental impact, rural access, road suitability, farming operations, noise, tourism impacts and the suitability of closed-road motorsport within the Shropshire Hills area. However, there is also significant support for the event in those areas as well.

2.4 Officers note that MSUK has issued a permit for the event, confirming that the organiser has completed the required statutory and regulatory processes, including consultation, submission timescales and safety documentation. Safety Advisory

Group consultation remains ongoing, and, at the present time, officers have not identified any fundamental technical or safety issue which they consider incapable of mitigation through appropriate planning and management or communication and engagement.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Consider the proposal to hold the Hills Ford Rally in Shropshire and, if agreed to approve the Motor Race Order and Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders required to facilitate the Hills Ford Stages Rally on 19–20 September 2026;
- 3.2 In consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways & Waste, delegate authority to the Service Director for Infrastructure to finalise and implement the associated TTROs and operational arrangements should approval be granted.

Report

4. Description of Event

- 4.1 The Hills Ford Stages Rally is a proposed closed-road stage rally organised by Cheltenham Motor Club.
- 4.2 The proposed event would comprise a ceremonial opening event within Shrewsbury town centre on Saturday 19 September 2026, including display of participating rally teams and vehicles, followed by a five-stage closed-road rally across southern Shropshire on Sunday 20 September 2026.
- 4.3 Approximately 140 competing vehicles are anticipated together with associated support crews, officials, volunteers and spectators. Event headquarters and service facilities are proposed at Battlefield Livestock Market.
- 4.4 Each rally stage would operate under temporary road closures during live competitive periods in the morning and the afternoon, with managed resident and business access arrangements operating where practicable between stage runs.
- 4.5 The event would operate under Motorsport UK regulations, including prescribed safety, insurance and operational requirements.

5. Statutory Processes

- 5.1 Closed-road motorsport events on public highways are permitted under provisions introduced through the Deregulation Act 2015 and associated amendments to the Road 5.2 Traffic Act 1988. Motorsport UK (MSUK) acts as the recognised national governing body responsible for permitting and regulating such events.
- 5.3 The proposed event would operate under a MSUK permit and within the associated statutory and regulatory framework governing closed-road motorsport in England and Wales. Motorsport UK has issued a permit for the proposed event following completion of the required consultation and assessment processes. MSUK also provides public liability insurance arrangements for permitted events up to £100m.

- 5.4 The MSUK permit process included a formal six-week consultation period between 28 January and 12 March 2026. Prior to this, Cheltenham Motor Club began direct engagement with affected residents, businesses, farms, landowners and parish councils, on the closed stages of the route and informal consultations with some affected residents on the approaches to the closed stages.
- 5.5 However, a MSUK permit does not compel the Highway Authority to make the associated Motor Race Order or the Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs). This remains a statutory decision for the Authority having regard to safety, operational impacts, mitigation measures, public representations and the wider public interest.
- 5.6 Ordinarily, under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the Service Director for Infrastructure is authorised to make TTROs. However, given the complexity, the scale of public interest, the nature of the objections received and reputational sensitivity associated with the proposal has resulted in referral of the matter to Cabinet for determination.
- 5.7 The guidelines for approving a motor race order and TTROs covers a number of key areas:

1. Statutory Approvals & Safety Governance

- **Motorsport UK Permit:** MSUK has formally issued the event permit, confirming organizers have met all statutory safety, stage suitability, and event management requirements.
- **Shropshire Council Remit:** The council does not approve events in their entirety. The Highway Authority's role is strictly limited to reviewing statutory operational matters, ensuring the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order and traffic management arrangements are appropriate.
- Shropshire's Safety Advisory Group does not approve events in their entirety but allows relevant stakeholders (including emergency services) to provide advice and consider in detail any plans for an event on and off the public highway.

2. Statutory Duties & Legal Frameworks

- **Network Management:** Ensure the surrounding road network maintains safe and efficient traffic flow under the Traffic Management Act 2004 (part of our role and ongoing under development of the event).
- Satisfy Section 12 (Road Traffic Act 1988) criteria to close roads for a 'motor race or trials of speed' (MSUK permit is issued, consider potential benefits, consider the impact on local communities, arrangements to further involve local residents, communities and emergency services in planning and implementing the event).
- Make the Temporary Traffic Restriction Order under section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

3. Emergency Service Access & Blue Light Routing

- **Blue Light Priority:** Event safety plan has a strict "red-flag" protocol to instantly halt the rally for unobstructed emergency vehicle access. Emergency response units attached to the rally also link into statutory responses in the region when requested to provide much faster response and support in the case of local 999 calls.

4. Local Access & Stakeholder Impact

- **Essential Access:** Maintain scheduled access windows for care workers, local businesses, and vital agricultural movements like milk tankers or animal welfare issues.
- **Resident Communication:** ensure communication and engagement with local communities throughout the planning and implementation of the event.

5. Highway Asset Protection

- **Dilapidation Surveys:** Conduct joint pre-and-post event video surveys to log the baseline condition of all roads and verges.
- **Reinstatement Liability:** Contractually bind organizers to clear all debris and repair damage at zero cost to the taxpayer, backed by **£100m Public Liability Insurance**.

6. **Conditions on the motor race order:** Section 16D of the RTA 1988 allows the highway authority to place conditions on the motor race order, designed to ensure that effective arrangements continue effectively throughout the planning and implementation of the event

6. Affected Divisions and Parish Councils

The proposed event affects several electoral divisions and parish council areas within southern Shropshire.

Linley Stage

Affected Parish Councils: Worthen with Shelve, More, Wentnor
Elected Members: Cllr Heather Kidd, Cllr Ruth Houghton

Dorrington Stage

Affected Parish Councils: Condover, Church Pulverbatch, Smethcott
Elected Members: Cllr Chris Naylor, Cllr Ruth Houghton

Cressage Stage

Affected Parish Councils: Cressage, Cound, Acton Burnell, Pitchford
Elected Members: Cllr Susan Coleman, Cllr Chris Naylor

Lawley Stage

Affected Parish Councils: Longnor, Cardington, Rushbury
Elected Members: Cllr Chris Naylor, Cllr Colin Stanford

Clee Hill Stage

Affected Parish Councils: Munslow, Abdon and Heath, Diddlebury, Clee St Margaret, Ditton Priors, Stanton Long
Elected Members: Cllr Colin Stanford, Cllr George Hollyhead, Cllr Dan Thomas

7. Consultation Undertaken by Cheltenham Motor Club

- 7.1 Cheltenham Motor Club (CMC) undertook both informal pre-application engagement and formal consultation through the Motorsport UK permitting process.

- 7.2 The organiser has advised that the principal focus during the early stages of the process was identifying and assessing suitable routes, engaging directly with those most immediately affected by proposed closures, and resolving site-specific operational concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.3 From September 2025 onwards informal consultation included direct engagement with residents, businesses, farms and landowners located on proposed closed-road and managed access routes, together with contact with parish councils to encourage wider local discussion and awareness. Representatives of the organiser attended parish council meetings and met directly with residents and stakeholders where requested, alongside ongoing liaison with Shropshire Council officers and initial engagement through the Safety Advisory Group process.
- 7.4 Route amendments and property-specific mitigation measures were also developed in response to concerns raised during the early stages of route development, where considered practicable, with ongoing engagement continuing as operational planning has evolved.
- 7.5 In addition, MSUK undertook the formal statutory consultation process associated with the event permit application. This consultation commenced on 28 January 2026 and remained open for a six-week period closing on 12 March 2026.
- 7.6 MSUK have noted that Church Pulverbatch responded to the formal consultation with an objection. Other parish councils contacted Shropshire Council to make representation both during the MSUK consultation period and after it had ended. Shropshire Council received objections from Church Pulverbatch Parish Council, Worthen with Shelve Parish Council and Cound Parish Council. Representations have also been received from elected members' Cllr Chris Naylor and Cllr Susan Coleman.
- 7.7 Whilst a number of residents and parish councils considered that wider community engagement should have occurred earlier in the process, officers are satisfied that substantial consultation and engagement activity has taken place over an extended period. The organiser has also acknowledged that earlier direct engagement with elected members may have been beneficial. Officers note that engagement with residents, communities, emergency services and other stakeholders are expected to continue during the planning and implementation of the event.
- 7.8 A summary of consultation activity and representations received is included within the Community Engagement Summary (Appendix A) and more detail on those representations and considerations made by Shropshire Council is given in the Event Report (appendix B).

8. Officer Conclusions Regarding Proposed Closures and Mitigation

- 8.1 Officers recognise that the proposed event would create temporary disruption and impacts for communities, businesses and road users.
- 8.2 However, officers also note:

- the temporary nature of the closures on each stage, expected to comprise approximately 2½ hours in the morning and 2½ hours in the afternoon, separated by an approximate one-hour access period;
- the regulated framework governing closed-road motorsport, including detailed safety, medical and operational planning requirements overseen through Motorsport UK and multi-agency review processes;
- the mitigation measures proposed by the organiser; and
- the continuing refinement of site-specific operational and mitigation arrangements.

8.3 Officers also recognise that impacts are not confined solely to the formally closed stages. Additional disruption may arise on surrounding roads and within nearby communities as a result of competitor movements, spectator traffic and wider event-related vehicle movements. These matters continue to form part of the ongoing traffic management and mitigation planning process.

8.4 Proposed mitigation measures include:

- professional traffic management, stewarding and SIA security provision;
- managed resident and business access arrangements where practicable;
- emergency and medical planning, including integration with statutory emergency response arrangements where required;
- spectator management arrangements developed with local communities and parish councils;
- Public Rights of Way management agreed with Shropshire Council;
- environmental mitigation measures aligned with Motorsport UK policy; and
- ongoing liaison with affected stakeholders, including residents, businesses, parish councils and elected members, as well as Shropshire SAG.

8.5 At the present time, officers have not identified any fundamental operational or safety issue which they consider incapable of mitigation through appropriate planning, event management and communication.

8.6 Nevertheless, officers recognise that residual reputational and community impacts remain a material consideration for the Authority.

8.7 Additionally, the National Landscape Team has been unable to support the proposed Rally because of potential impacts on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and have asked that should the Rally be approved that the event organisers are asked to implement extra measures and further mitigation (Appendix C). The CMC have stated that they have previously partnered with local wildlife and nature organisations and plan to do so for this event.

9. Objections

9.1 The principal objections received relate to impacts on rural tranquillity and the Shropshire Hills National Landscape, environmental and climate concerns, farming and agricultural access, road suitability and highway condition, noise and visitor activity, Public Rights of Way, and concerns regarding consultation and community engagement.

- 9.2 The largest concentration of objections relates to the Dorrington and Linley stages, including objections from Church Pulverbatch Parish Council, Worthen with Shelve Parish Council and Cound Parish Council, together with representations from elected members and local residents.
- 9.3 Officers note that, whilst significant concerns have been raised within some communities, only a small proportion of properties and businesses located directly on the proposed closed-road stages have objected in principle to the event itself. Officers have reviewed engagement logs and correspondence provided by the organiser, which indicate that many directly affected residents, businesses and landowners engaged through the early consultation process are either supportive of the event or broadly accepting subject to appropriate access and mitigation arrangements.
- 9.4 A number of site-specific concerns raised during consultation have resulted in route amendments, operational changes or continuing direct liaison in order to identify practical solutions where possible. example; Additionally specific environmental issues continue to form part of ongoing operational planning and mitigation discussions involving the organiser, Shropshire Highways, the Safety Advisory Group process and other relevant stakeholders. This includes consideration of traffic management, spectator management, resident and farm access arrangements, Public Rights of Way management, liaison with affected businesses and visitor sites, and post-event inspection or remediation arrangements where appropriate.
- 9.5 Some temporary disturbance is inherent with every event that takes place on the public highway, and more so within a regulated closed-road motorsport event operating under the national legislative and Motorsport UK framework. The Authority must therefore consider whether the impacts identified are proportionate, time-limited and capable of reasonable mitigation, balanced against the wider legislative framework under which such events are permitted. A significant traffic management plan including diversions for vehicles and cyclists will be in place. Public Rights of Way plans are already being drawn up to satisfy how ramblers and walkers can be accommodated best.
- 9.6 The Authority is aware that a previous proposal for a closed-road rally involving this organizer did not progress within Herefordshire. However the circumstances there involved ongoing concerns regarding operational and mitigation arrangements, and an agreement was ultimately not reached with that Highway Authority primarily because time ran out to put those plans into effect.
- 9.7 However, the Highway Authority, must consider each proposed event strictly on its own merits. This requires assessing the specific routes, consultations, representations, and mitigation measures unique to Shropshire. The organizers at CMC have already demonstrated a more rigorous approach in Shropshire to mitigate concerns raised in Herefordshire.
- 9.8 A smaller number of supportive representations have also been received citing the temporary and regulated nature of the event, potential visitor economy benefits and opportunities for local participation and hospitality activity. Recent local media and social media articles have prompted high numbers of positive local reaction to the proposed event.

9.9 A summary of consultation activity and representations received is included within the Community Engagement Summary (Appendix A) and more detail on those representations and considerations made by Shropshire Council is given in the Event Report (Appendix B).

10. Economic Value

- 10.1 The event is anticipated to generate visitor and associated economic activity linked to accommodation, hospitality, food and beverage businesses, garage and mechanic services, fuel sales and wider tourism expenditure.
- 10.2 The organiser estimates that approximately 500 personnel associated with competing teams, officials and event operations would attend, together with an estimated additional 1,000–2,000 spectators and volunteers over the event weekend. The ceremonial opening event within Shrewsbury town centre has received support from Shrewsbury Town Council and Shrewsbury BID, who consider the event capable of generating positive visitor activity and town centre footfall.
- 10.3 Appraisal work undertaken by the Department for Transport during the introduction of closed-road motorsport legislation recognised the potential for such events to generate local economic and visitor benefits for host areas. Comparable closed-road rally events elsewhere in the UK have also reported positive visitor economy impacts, although the scale of benefit is influenced by factors including event maturity, spectator attendance and local tourism infrastructure. By way of illustration, economic assessment work by MSUK independent data shows a 130-car closed-road rally delivers a typical **£750,000 to £1.5 million** injection to the host economy. The **Tour O The Borders**, as a comparable closed-road sports model, is a cycling event that generated an independently assessed **£755,000** for the Scottish Borders.
- 10.4 This event might be expected to generate an estimated £350,000 to over £750,000 for the regional economy. The rally drives local investment through increased tourism, support crew lodging, dining, and spectator spending at hospitality businesses in host counties and the rally generates an estimated local spend of between £50 and £100 per person over the weekend.
- 10.5 Officers nevertheless recognise that economic impacts are likely to vary geographically and that some businesses and accommodation providers consider the event potentially detrimental to their operations due to disruption, access concerns, and the possibility of some visitors choosing to avoid the area during the event weekend.
- 10.6 Other rallies in the UK encourage local communities to ‘wrap’ the rally day or the whole weekend in local fetes or festivals around the event itself.
- 10.7 Local communities are also encouraged to manage spectator parking and viewing hubs and they retain 100% of all parking and ticket fees collected. Local businesses are encouraged to take up commercial opportunities like food and drink stalls, farm shops etc. Local farms are also engaged to provide soft crash barriers or route markers like hay bales.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 Having reviewed the available information, officers confirm that the Chelmsford Motor Club (CMC) has followed the statutory process and [Motorsport UK guidance](#). From a technical and operational perspective, officers are satisfied that the proposed event can proceed within the applicable legislative and regulatory framework governing closed-road motorsport events.
- 11.2 Officers expect the event promoters to maintain positive, proactive engagement with local communities as planning and implementation progress over the coming months. Accordingly, pursuant to **Section 12D of the Road Traffic Act 1988**, the highway authority is satisfied that adequate arrangements exist to account for local community views, the event is commercially viable, and effective planning involves the relevant emergency services. Therefore, officers have determined that Shropshire Council can make the event race order under Section 12D (Road Traffic Act 1988) and associated TTROs (under Section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984).

12. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 12.1. Risks associated with the Rally are effectively regulated under the Deregulation Act 2015 which allows Motorsport UK to permit the event having undertaken consultation and considered all aspects of the competition and mitigated risks within the permitting framework. Council officers have reviewed proposals against the regulatory and permitting framework and conclude proposals are proper, reasonable and safe and there is no fundamental reason to object to the proposed rally.
- 12.2. As outlined in the report, whilst the Rally will have temporary impact on community access, and arguably some additional environmental impact there are potential economic benefits such as tourism and local associated spend with the Rally, its supporters (both those servicing vehicles and spectators).
- 12.3. In addition, the Rally organisers have provided their environmental Impact document (Appendix D) which aligns with MSUK guidance.
- 12.4. Whilst no specific economic assessment has been undertaken members will note in the report benefits identified with similar events in the UK (section 10 above) and that an opening ceremony currently proposed in Shrewsbury will likely attract visitors supporting the event and extra economic activity in the town centre.

13. Financial Implications

- 13.1. There are no financial implications for the Council other than complying with its statutory highway obligations in terms of reviewing the proposal as presented by Cheltenham Motor Club, and the permitting provided by Motorsport UK, and making of the motor race Order and TTRO to allow for the temporary closure of specified roads for the purposes of the organised Rally.

13.2. Nevertheless, there is likely to be an economic benefit for Shrewsbury and potentially local communities as outlined above in the report.

14. Climate Change Appraisal

14.1. No specific climate change appraisal has been undertaken by the Council.

14.2. However, the event has been permitted as stated above under the Deregulation Act 2015 and impacts considered by Motorsport UK and mitigated in consideration of consultation findings.

Local Members:

Cllr Coleman

Cllr Naylor

Cllr Kidd

Cllr Haughton

Cllr Stanford

Cllr Holyhead

Cllr Thomas

Consultation with Local Member – As outlined in the body of the report and summarised in the Community Engagement Summary appended.

Appendices

A - CMC Community Engagement Summary

B - CMC Proposed Closed Road Rally Event report

C - Objection – National Landscape Team

D - Environmental Impact document