

Proposed Closed Road Rally Event – Cheltenham Motor Club

Briefing Report

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the proposed Hills Ford Stages Rally organised by Cheltenham Motor Club (CMC), including the legislative framework, consultation undertaken, representations received, and the principal considerations relevant to the Authority's determination of the associated road closure application.

The proposed event would comprise a multi-stage closed-road rally utilising sections of the public highway within Shropshire. Motorsport UK has issued a permit for the event in accordance with the applicable legislative and regulatory framework governing closed-road motorsport events.

However, the proposed road closures required for the event remain subject to separate consideration and approval by the Highway Authority through the making of the necessary road closure order(s).

This report summarises the principal issues raised through consultation and representations received, together with officer observations regarding operational, safety, environmental and community considerations associated with the proposed event.

Given the level of public interest and the range of views expressed, officers consider it appropriate that senior management review the matters set out within this report prior to any formal determination being made regarding the associated road closure order(s).

2. Executive Summary

Cheltenham Motor Club has applied to hold the Hills Ford Stages Rally within Shropshire on 19 and 20 September 2026.

The proposed event would comprise:

- a ceremonial start event within Shrewsbury town centre on Saturday 19 September 2026; and
- a closed-road stage rally event on Sunday 20 September 2026 involving five competitive stages located within southern Shropshire, including areas within the Shropshire Hills National Landscape.

The proposed rally will operate under a Motorsport UK (MSUK) permit, strictly adhering to the legislative framework for closed-road motorsport in England and Wales. MSUK enforces national and international safety regulations and provides £100m in public liability insurance. Furthermore, the event is governed by a robust event and safety management plan, developed in direct consultation with the emergency services and the local Safety Advisory Group (SAG)

The issuing of a Motorsport UK permit does not, however, compel the Highway Authority to make the associated road closure order(s), which remain a matter for separate consideration by the Authority.

The organiser has undertaken both informal and formal consultation processes, including engagement with residents, businesses, farms, parish councils as well as statutory stakeholders. Those who engaged in the early-stage door knocks on the proposed closed road stages ('red routes') were generally supportive of the event.

A coordinated number of representations have subsequently been received by the Authority, surrounding one of the stages, the majority raising concerns or objections relating to issues including:

- consultation and communication;
- rural access and farming operations;
- environmental and climate impacts;
- noise and disturbance;
- road suitability and highway condition;
- Public Rights of Way;
- tourism and community impact; and
- the broader suitability of closed-road motorsport activity within the affected rural area.

On another stage, other representation has been received from an elected member and their parish council(s). The objections were largely around considerations of road suitability and a perceived lack of communication from the organisers.

Other stages have received positive backing from local councillors and parish councils.

A small number of representations in support of the event have also been received, including from residents directly affected by proposed routes and from individuals supportive of motorsport activity and the potential visitor and economic benefits associated with the event.

The organiser has advised that a number of mitigation measures and operational arrangements are proposed, including:

- managed access arrangements for residents and businesses where possible;
- professional traffic management provision;
- Motorsport UK regulated safety and operational procedures;
- dedicated medical and emergency planning arrangements;
- Public Rights of Way management measures;
- spectator management proposals; and
- ongoing environmental and community mitigation measures.

At the time of writing:

- Safety Advisory Group consultation remains ongoing;
- detailed operational planning continues to evolve;
- some site-specific access and mitigation matters remain under discussion; and
- further refinement of traffic management, spectator management and environmental arrangements is anticipated.

Having reviewed the information presently available, officers are satisfied that the organisers have followed due legislative process required by them and the MSUK permit has been granted to this effect. Officers are also satisfied that proposed event is capable in principle of proceeding within the applicable legislative and regulatory framework and that no fundamental technical or operational issue has presently been identified which officers consider incapable of mitigation through appropriate planning and management.

However, officers also recognise that the proposal has generated significant public interest and opposition within certain affected communities and that a number of issues raised extend beyond purely technical considerations into broader matters of community impact, environmental perception and public policy.

It is common for public highway events in the county to receive resident objections; Shropshire assess about 150 of these annually. Highly disruptive and noisy events, like the 4-to-5-day charter fairs in market towns, regularly draw complaints, as do the larger sporting events. In contrast, only a relatively small proportion of properties and businesses directly on red routes have objected in principle—and some neighbouring parish councils. Notably, three of the five stages have received no significant objections.

It is standard practice for these events to consult directly affected properties first. Once the full event plan, timings, and impacts are finalized, wider community engagement begins. Most events run smoothly because local residents know exactly what to expect and when.

During operational closures, affected residents, landowners, and agricultural operators will be encouraged to take reasonable and suitable precautions to manage their vehicles, livestock, working animals, and nearby activities close to live stage routes.

Given the increasingly limited timeframe available for progression of the remaining operational planning and event management arrangements, officers recommend that senior management determination regarding the proposed road closure order(s) is made at the earliest practicable opportunity.

3. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

3.1 National Legislative Context

Closed-road motorsport events on public highways in England are permitted within a statutory framework established through amendments introduced by the Deregulation Act 2015 to the Road Traffic Act 1988, together with associated regulations governing motor competitions on public highways.

The legislation enables approved motorsport governing bodies and highway authorities to facilitate closed-road motorsport events subject to prescribed safety, consultation and operational requirements.

The legislative framework was introduced to permit regulated motorsport events to take place on public roads under controlled conditions, recognising both the potential economic and community benefits of such events and the need for appropriate safeguards relating to safety, access and disruption.

The national governing body recognised for this purpose is Motorsport UK (MSUK).

MSUK acts as the national governing body for motorsport in the United Kingdom and is responsible for:

- administering the permitting process for closed-road motorsport events;
- establishing applicable competition and safety regulations;
- overseeing compliance with MSUK National Competition Rules and Stage Rally Safety Requirements; and
- providing the governing framework under which the event would operate.

3.2 Event Governance and Organisational Structure

The proposed event is titled the ***Hills Ford Stages Rally***.

Officers received representations seeking clarification regarding the organisational and company structure associated with the proposed event.

Cheltenham Motor Club operates as a Motorsport UK registered club authorised to organise permitted motorsport events. Officers were advised that Cheltenham Motor Club (2026) Ltd has been established in connection with operational delivery of the proposed event and that insurance and permitting arrangements are provided through the Motorsport UK governance framework.

Officers have not identified any issue arising from the organisational arrangements which would, in itself, prevent consideration of the associated road closure application.

The organiser has advised that:

- CMC has completed the MSUK permitting process and a permit has been issued for the proposed event;
- insurance cover for the event is provided through MSUK under its closed-road motorsport arrangements;

The MSUK permit confirms that the event has satisfied the governing body's requirements in principle; however, the permit does not itself authorise the closure of public highways.

For the purposes of this report, CMC is considered the 'organiser' although in public and general correspondence the organiser is identified with the event (the 'Hills Ford Stages' – HFS).

3.4 Role of the Highway Authority

In addition to the MSUK permit, the proposed event requires the Highway Authority to make the necessary road closure order(s) to temporarily prohibit public access to affected highways for the duration of the event.

The Authority must make an order under Section 12 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (a 'motor race order') if they have determined that the organiser has satisfied the requirements under this section to hold the event.

The Highway Authority may not make the motor race order unless it is satisfied that:

- (a) adequate arrangements have been made to allow the views of the local community to be taken into account, and
- (b) the person proposing to promote the event has shown that the event is commercially viable, and
- (c) effective arrangements have been made to involve local residents, the police and other emergency services in the planning and implementation of the event.

In deciding whether or not to make an order the Highway Authority must consider:

- (a) the likely impact of the event on the local community,
- (b) the potential local economic and other benefits (in respect of tourism or otherwise), and
- (c) any other local considerations that the Authority thinks relevant.

The Authority may then also make the relevant Temporary Traffic Restriction Orders to close the roads required, under section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act (1984).

The Authority may place conditions on the motor race order which must be satisfied before, during or after the event, in particular conditions designed to ensure the arrangements continue throughout the planning and implementation of the event.

Without the making of the relevant order(s), the event cannot lawfully proceed on the public highway.

The decision whether to make such an order rests with the Highway Authority, which must consider the application having regard to:

- public safety;
- traffic management and operational impacts;
- access arrangements for residents, businesses and emergency services;
- representations received;
- proportionality of disruption;

- mitigation measures proposed by the organiser; and
- the wider public interest.

The Authority therefore retains discretion as to whether the order should be made.

Officers note that the Authority's review of proposed road closures is independent of MSUK's permit process. Issuing a MSUK permit neither requires Highway Authority approval for a motor sport order or road closures nor absolves the Authority of its duty to assess local impacts and statutory obligations before making a decision.

At the time of writing, officers have not identified any specific statutory appeal mechanism to the Secretary of State in circumstances where a highway authority declines to make the necessary road closure or motor race order. The determination therefore remains a discretionary decision of the relevant highway authority exercised within the applicable legislative framework.

Officers further note that representations received from residents, elected members, parish councils, businesses, supporters and objectors have been considered as part of the Authority's assessment process. The Authority's consideration remains an independent assessment of the relevant **legal**, **operational**, **safety** and **community** factors associated with the proposed event.

3.5 Consultation Requirements

The regulations require statutory consultation to be undertaken as part of the MSUK permitting process. In addition to this formal consultation, event organisers will commonly undertake informal engagement with affected communities, parish councils, elected members, businesses and residents in advance of the event.

Whilst the statutory consultation process forms part of the Motorsport UK permitting regime, the Highway Authority may also take account of representations received directly in relation to the proposed road closure order and associated local impacts.

3.6 Scope of Considerations

In determining whether the proposed Orders should be made, the Authority must consider matters materially relevant to the operation and impact of the event.

These include:

- safety and route suitability;
- resident and business access;
- environmental and noise impacts;
- emergency planning;
- traffic management arrangements;
- local economic and tourism considerations;
- adequacy of consultation and communications;
- proportionality and duration of disruption.

The Authority is not required to determine broader matters relating to national motorsport policy or the principle of closed-road motorsport legislation itself, which are established through the national legislative framework.

Key Legislative and Guidance References

Road Traffic Act 1988 – Section 12 (Motor Racing on Public Ways)

[Road Traffic Act 1988](#)

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 16A (Power to Restrict or Prohibit Traffic for Special Events)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/27/section/16A>

Deregulation Act 2015 – Sections 73–75 (Amendments relating to Motor Sport Events on Public Roads)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/20/section/73>

Deregulation Act 2015 – Explanatory Notes (Motor Racing Provisions)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/20/notes/division/5/73>

Motor Vehicles (Competitions and Trials) Regulations 1969

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1969/414>

Motorsport UK – Events on the Public Highway Guidance

<https://motorsportuk.org/clubs-organisers/events-on-the-public-highway/>

Motorsport UK – Route Authorisation Guidance

<https://motorsportuk.org/clubs-organisers/faq/faq-route-authorisation/>

4. Event Overview

Officers note that operational planning remains iterative in nature, with further refinement of safety, PRow, spectator management and contingency arrangements and consultation with the Safety Advisory Group etc., are expected as event planning progresses.

At the time of writing the following points are of relevance.

4.1 Overview of Proposed Event

Cheltenham Motor Club has applied to hold a closed-road stage rally event within Shropshire in September 2026.

The proposed event comprises:

- a ceremonial opening event within Shrewsbury town centre on Saturday 19 September 2026; and
- a competitive closed-road rally event on Sunday 20 September 2026.

The ceremonial opening event is intended as a public-facing display of participating vehicles and teams and would involve limited temporary road closures within the town centre.

The main rally event on Sunday 20 September would comprise five closed-road stages located within southern Shropshire, including sections within nationally protected landscape areas (Shropshire Hills National Landscape). See Appendix.

The event is anticipated to attract approximately 120 competing vehicles together with associated teams, support crews, officials, volunteers and spectators.

The organiser has advised that the principal event headquarters and service area for the rally will be located at Battlefield Livestock Market.

4.2 Event Operation and Road Closures

Each rally stage would operate as a fully closed road section during competitive running periods. For the purposes of event planning and consultation, the organiser has generally categorised roads associated with the event as either:

- closed-road stage routes (“red routes”), being roads formally closed to normal public traffic during live competitive stage operation periods; or
- managed access routes (“green routes”), being adjoining or connecting roads where controlled resident, business or operational access may continue subject to stewarding, traffic management arrangements and operational safety requirements.

The current proposal is for each stage to close red routes for approximately two and a half hours during the morning running period and two and a half hours during the afternoon running period.

Competing vehicles would leave at approximately one-minute intervals.

Between competitive runs, arrangements would be in place to permit controlled vehicle movements on red routes for residents, businesses, farms and other authorised users where operationally safe to do so.

In addition to the fully closed stages, adjoining roads and access points would operate under “managed access” arrangements (green routes). These arrangements would permit varying levels of resident and local access under marshal supervision depending upon proximity to the live stage, vehicle movements and safety requirements at the relevant time.

Any access arrangements will vary by location and operational needs. Most green routes may remain ‘open’ at all times, whereas others may be subject to short-duration temporary restrictions associated with vehicle queuing, start-line management or live stage operation.

The organiser has advised that residents and businesses directly affected by closures will receive detailed event information and access guidance in advance of the event, including the issuing of passes, a handbook and other access arrangements where required.

CMC will utilise a dedicated event radio communications system used by key officials and linked directly to Event Headquarters in order to provide clear and rapid operational communication throughout the event.

4.3 Traffic Management and Safety Arrangements

The organiser has advised that all formal road closures, traffic management measures and associated access points would be managed by a professional traffic management contractor experienced in delivering motorsport and major event road management operations. Beaumont Traffic Management Ltd have been contracted to provide this service.

In addition to professional traffic management personnel, the event would utilise a substantial volunteer marshal network responsible for:

- spectator management;
- footpath crossing supervision;
- resident liaison;
- access management;
- communication of safety information; and
- operational support during the event.

The organiser has advised that their marshals and officials are experienced in stewarding MSUK permitted events, with some personnel holding MSUK licences appropriate to their operational role, including safety-related functions. Additional marshals and volunteers would receive briefing and training in accordance with MSUK event requirements. Security stewards are employed and SIA registered.

The organiser has further advised that dedicated personnel would be assigned specifically to resident access and welfare matters, including emergency situations requiring immediate access through closure points.

The proposed stage routes are understood to have undergone independent assessment to ensure compliance with MSUK requirements relating to matters such as road width, camber, route geometry and general suitability for closed-road stage rallying.

The organiser has further advised that:

- a designated safety car would inspect and formally close each stage immediately prior to competitive use;

- pre-event route inspections would take place during the week preceding the event to identify hazards, road condition issues or other operational concerns;
- ongoing consultation is taking place through the Shropshire Safety Advisory Group (SAG); and
- Shropshire Council Highways (SCH) would be kept informed regarding route condition and any required remedial works.

The organiser has advised that where highway repairs or reinstatement works are considered necessary as a result of the event, CMC would work with SCH regarding appropriate remedial measures and associated costs.

Farmers and landowners may be requested to provide temporary soft barrier protection, including straw or hay bales, at agreed locations where additional physical protection is considered beneficial. The organiser has advised that compensation arrangements would apply in such circumstances.

4.4 Vehicle Monitoring

Whilst competitive activity takes place only on formally closed-road stages, participating vehicles are required to travel between stages on the ordinary public highway under normal road traffic legislation and MSUK regulations.

The organiser has advised that:

- all competing vehicles are required to remain fully road legal, including MOT compliance and conformity with applicable road vehicle requirements;
- vehicles are allocated prescribed journey times and speed expectations between service areas and competitive stages; and
- all vehicles are remotely tracked and monitored during these liaison sections.

MSUK regulations impose strict requirements regarding compliance with normal road traffic laws outside competitive stage areas, and competitors may face penalties including exclusion from the event for non-compliance.

4.5 Emergency Planning and Public Safety

The event safety arrangements would include dedicated motorsport medical provision operating directly on each stage, including paramedic and ambulance resources positioned within close proximity to live competition sections.

The organiser has advised that dedicated medical crews would be present on each stage throughout competitive operation periods.

The organiser has further advised that emergency response arrangements are designed to provide rapid intervention capability throughout live stage operation periods, including coordination with statutory emergency services where required.

It is understood that, during periods when stages are operational, emergency medical incidents arising within or immediately adjacent to the live stage areas may, where appropriate, initially be managed or attended by the dedicated event medical resources deployed on the stages, operating in liaison with normal emergency service control arrangements.

Emergency access procedures for residents, businesses and farms located within closure areas would form part of the operational event management plan.

Officers note that closed-road rallying in the UK operates within a highly regulated safety environment governed by MSUK requirements relating to route design, vehicle standards, medical provision, marshal deployment, communication systems and operational control. While motorsport activity inherently carries risk, serious incidents within professionally organised UK rally events are comparatively uncommon relative to the scale and frequency of events held nationally each year, reflecting the significant emphasis placed upon safety management and regulatory oversight.

4.6 Footpaths and Public Rights of Way

All the proposed event routes intersect with a number of footpaths and Public Rights of Way (PRoW). The organiser is currently working with Shropshire Council's PRoW team to develop a detailed management plan for crossings, diversions and pedestrian safety arrangements where required.

At the time of writing, a draft PRoW management approach has been discussed between event representatives and the Council's PRoW officers. The draft arrangements include:

- verification of all affected footpaths and PRoW crossings through joint route inspections;
- deployment of MSUK marshals at footpath exit points onto live stages;
- advance warning signage at agreed locations two weeks prior to the event;
- additional event-day signage at footpath exits onto closed roads;
- notification to walking and rambling groups regarding the event and affected routes; and
- advance notification signage at car parks and recognised visitor parking locations.

4.7 Spectator Management

The organiser has advised that spectator activity would be encouraged to use designated viewing and parking areas. The stated intention of this approach is:

- to reduce uncontrolled roadside spectator activity;
- minimise informal parking and pedestrian movement across agricultural land;
- improve safety management; and
- provide opportunities for local community participation and associated economic activity where desired locally.

The organiser has stated that local landowners, farms, or parish councils will be encouraged to independently manage the designated spectator areas and related parking facilities. These parties might also offer toilets or other temporary infrastructure for visitors when needed. CMC will give guidance on how these facilities may operate and provide relevant safety advice.

4.8 Insurance and Event Governance

The organiser has advised that the event operates under MSUK governance arrangements and insurance provisions applicable to permitted closed-road motorsport events.

Officers have been advised that insurance cover for the event is provided through the MSUK master insurance policy upon issue of the relevant permit and includes specific provision relating to closed-road rally activity, including associated road surface cover, subject to compliance with Motorsport UK permit conditions and applicable Motorsport UK regulations.

The policy documentation provided indicates headline indemnity limits including:

- Public Liability: £100m each occurrence;
- Medical Malpractice: £15m; and
- Professional Liability: £10m,

subject in each case to the terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations of the policy.

Officers note that the insurance documentation provided as part of the application process will be subject to review by the Council's Legal and Insurance teams.

Officers further note that operational safety arrangements associated with the event are intended to minimise the likelihood of incidents involving residents, spectators, livestock, domestic animals or other third parties adjacent to the route.

4.9 Wildlife and Environmental issues

The organiser has provided officers with draft environmental and sustainability information relating to the proposed event, including an outline environmental management approach and proposals intended to mitigate or reduce environmental impacts where reasonably practicable.

The organiser has advised that the event would operate within MSUK environmental and sustainability frameworks applicable to permitted motorsport events and has referenced MSUK sustainability arrangements and guidance.

The information provided by the organiser indicates that proposed environmental and sustainability measures may include:

- minimisation of printed documentation where practicable;
- post-event route inspections and remediation arrangements;
- waste management and litter control measures;
- management of spectator activity through designated viewing and parking areas;
- environmental monitoring and reporting arrangements;
- encouraging teams to use alternative or synthetic fuels where available and operationally appropriate;
- liaison or partnering with local environmental or wildlife groups; and
- identification of potential environmental or biodiversity-related partnership opportunities associated with the event.

The organiser has further advised that environmental considerations would continue to form part of ongoing operational planning and that environmental management documentation would be refined as the event develops, and they intend to partner with Shropshire Wildlife and other organisations to develop locally impactful initiatives.

5. Consultation and Engagement

5.1 Overview

The proposed event has involved both informal pre-application engagement undertaken by Cheltenham Motor Club (CMC) and formal statutory consultation undertaken through the Motorsport UK (MSUK) permitting process.

Informal engagement commenced prior to the formal MSUK consultation and continued over several months whilst proposed routes, access arrangements and operational planning were being developed.

Officers note that the early stages of engagement were principally focused on residents, businesses, farms, landowners and stakeholders directly affected by proposed closed-road stages and managed access routes. Wider community awareness of the proposals subsequently increased through parish council engagement, the statutory consultation process and broader circulation of event information as planning progressed.

Further engagement with communities is expected to happen as the event continues to develop.

5.2 Informal Consultation Undertaken by Cheltenham Motor Club

CMC advised that informal engagement commenced during September 2025 following development of draft stage routes and initial discussions with Shropshire Council officers.

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.

Engagement undertaken by the organiser included:

- door-to-door visits and leaflet distribution to properties located on proposed red and green routes;
- direct engagement with businesses, farms and landowners located on or immediately adjacent to proposed routes;
- contact with parish councils to encourage wider local discussion and awareness;
- attendance at parish council meetings and meetings with residents or stakeholders where requested; and
- ongoing dialogue regarding operational impacts, access requirements and mitigation arrangements.

Officers received a small number of representations during the early stages of the informal consultation process, principally relating to:

- residents stating that they had become aware of the event indirectly;
- the level of information initially provided;
- concerns that some properties had received leaflet information without direct discussion; and

- concerns regarding the level of publicly available detail relating to proposed routes during the early consultation stage.

CMC advised officers that, during the early route development phase, detailed publication of proposed stage routes and operational timings was intentionally limited whilst consultation, route assessment and traffic management arrangements were still being developed.

The organiser advised that this approach was intended to:

- avoid premature publication of incomplete or evolving route information;
- reduce the risk of unmanaged activity or informal route use prior to formal planning and control measures being established;
- allow initial engagement to focus on directly affected properties and stakeholders; and
- ensure that operational safety, traffic management and access arrangements could be appropriately developed prior to wider circulation of detailed event information.

This approach also extended to indicative road closure timings. Early public information generally referred to roads being closed “during the day” or “all day” rather than specifying detailed operational closure periods. The organiser subsequently advised that actual live stage closures are expected to operate for shorter defined periods during the morning and afternoon, with detailed timings continuing to evolve during the operational planning process.

Officers note that, notwithstanding these considerations, some residents and parish councils considered that insufficient route detail was initially available during the informal consultation phase.

Officers note that some residents were unavailable during initial property visits and therefore received leaflet information and organiser contact details without face-to-face discussion at that stage. Officers also note that awareness of the developing proposals in some areas appears to have spread through parish discussion, neighbouring properties and social media prior to further follow-up engagement taking place.

Where concerns were raised directly with officers, CMC responded promptly to requests for clarification or follow-up engagement. Additionally in a number of instances, draft stage routes were amended or alternative route options explored specifically in response to concerns raised by residents or businesses around expected agricultural activity, animal welfare anxiety and business operation.

Officers are aware of several examples where:

- proposed routes were amended to avoid particular properties or locations following concerns raised by residents or farmers; and
- specific mitigation arrangements were discussed in relation to operational business or properties
- specific access requirements, including agricultural and milk tanker access arrangements.

CMC has advised officers that achieving broad agreement from properties directly affected by proposed red routes was considered an important part of the route development process and that significant unresolved objections could lead to reconsideration of proposed route options.

Engagement and operational discussions continued throughout late 2025 and into the formal consultation period, with further liaison continuing as operational planning has evolved and continuing at the present time.

5.3 Parish Council and Elected Member Engagement

CMC advised that parish councils affected by proposed routes were contacted during the informal engagement stage.

The organiser advised that responses varied considerably, with some parish councils expressing support or no objection in principle, some expressing concerns, some not responding initially, and further follow-up contact subsequently being undertaken in a number of cases.

The organiser further advised that representatives attended parish council meetings and met directly with elected members and local stakeholders where requested.

Officers note that the timing and frequency of parish council meetings varied considerably and that, in some cases, meeting schedules and existing agendas limited opportunities for early discussion of the proposal during the informal engagement phase or indeed later on when members and Parish Councils started to become more aware of the event scale.

As the proposal became more widely known, particularly at the commencement of the statutory consultation period, some elected members and parish councils expressed concerns regarding:

- the extent and timing of informal consultation;
- whether parish councils and in particular elected members should have been informed earlier in the process; and
- whether sufficient opportunity had existed for wider community discussion prior to the MSUK consultation stage.

Officers continued to receive representations from residents, elected members and parish councils following commencement of the formal MSUK consultation process.

5.5 Motorsport UK Statutory Consultation Process

Following development of the proposed routes and completion of the initial engagement stage, CMC proceeded with the formal MSUK permitting process.

The MSUK consultation process involves consultation with relevant statutory and operational stakeholders, including the Highway Authority, Police, emergency services, local authorities and other bodies considered relevant to the proposed event and routes.

The formal MSUK consultation commenced on 28 January 2026 and closed on 12 March 2026.

MSUK confirm that only Church Pulverbatch Parish Council responded to the MSUK consultation (with an objection).

MSUK subsequently issued a permit for the proposed event following completion of its consultation and assessment procedures. It should be noted that the issuing of a MSUK permit does not compel the Highway Authority to make the associated road closure order. Government guidance expressly notes that:

The Authority must therefore separately consider whether it is appropriate to make the required road closure order(s), having regard to the operational, legal, safety and community considerations associated with the proposed event.

5.6 Ongoing Engagement and Current Position

Following the MSUK consultation stage, officers began receiving a significantly increased number of objections and representations relating to the proposed event.

The principal themes raised within those representations are summarised in section 6 of this report.

At the time of writing:

- discussions between officers, CMC and affected stakeholders remain ongoing;
- operational mitigation measures continue to be refined;
- Public Rights of Way management arrangements remain under development;
- Safety Advisory Group consultation remains ongoing; and
- officers continue to assess the representations received alongside the operational and legal considerations associated with the proposed event.

The organiser has advised that additional detailed communication and publicity, including resident and business information leaflets are intended to be issued should the event proceed, including route-specific operational information for both closed-road and managed-access locations.

6. Summary of Representations Received

6.1 Principal Themes Raised in Objection

Following commencement of the formal MSUK consultation process and wider circulation of information regarding the proposed event, officers received a significant number of representations from parish councils, elected members, residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

Representations received include both objections to and expressions of support for the proposed event, although the majority of correspondence received has raised concerns or objections relating to the proposal.

Officers encouraged parish councils, elected members, residents, businesses and other stakeholders to submit representations setting out their views, concerns and observations regarding the proposed event in order that these could be properly considered as part of the Authority's assessment process.

The representations received raise a broad range of issues including:

- consultation and communication;
- resident and business access;
- farming and agricultural operations;
- road suitability and highway condition;
- Public Rights of Way and recreational use of countryside and paths;
- environmental and climate considerations;
- noise and disturbance;
- tourism and economic impacts;
- public safety; and
- the broader suitability of closed-road motorsport activity within the affected rural area.

Officers are currently reviewing a small number of more recent site-specific concerns relating to particular properties, businesses and agricultural operations in order to determine whether additional mitigation or clarification may be required.

Officers further note that many of the objections received to date appear to originate from residents and stakeholders not directly located on the proposed red or green routes themselves, although such representations may nevertheless relate to wider impacts arising from the event, including:

- diversionary traffic;
- increased visitor and spectator activity;
- rural access and agricultural movement;
- noise and environmental concerns; and
- broader concerns regarding the suitability of closed-road motorsport activity within the affected area.

Accordingly, officers consider that both directly affected operational impacts and wider community concerns require consideration as part of the Authority's overall assessment of the proposal.

Whilst certain parish councils have expressed opposition in principle to the event taking place within their parish areas, the organiser maintains that many properties and businesses located directly on proposed red and green route sections have either agreed access arrangements or are not objecting in principle, subject to ongoing operational discussion.

It is important to note that as planning continues the organisers will continue to engage with residents and businesses on the red and green routes, as well as the wider community.

6.2 Site-Specific / Directly Affected Concerns

Specific operational concerns identified include:

- The Bottle and Glass Inn, Picklescott;
- Lane Farm, Wilderley;
- Wilderley Hall Farm dairy operations;
- holiday accommodation businesses near to proposed routes;
- the recently repaired ford at Fullway;
- the Frogs Gutter / Knolls Farm area;
- Shropshire Forestry premises at Cound; and
- general agricultural and livestock access requirements.

As the event progresses through further development, additional site-specific concerns that have not yet been identified may emerge.

6.3 Supportive Representations

Supportive comments have been received, including:

- potential tourism and visitor economy benefits;
- community participation opportunities;
- support for motorsport as a regulated activity;
- economic benefit to hospitality businesses;
- support from at least one resident directly located on the proposed route;
- recognition that disruption would be temporary and professionally managed.

Supportive representations also include residents and stakeholders who expressed enthusiasm for motorsport activity itself and welcomed the opportunity to host or observe a professionally organised closed-road rally event within the local area.

Additionally, CMC have advised that Shrewsbury Town Council (STC) and Shrewsbury BID have expressed strong support for the ceremonial opening event proposed within Shrewsbury town centre. This would involve participating rally vehicles, teams and associated event activity being presented to the public prior to the competitive stages taking place the following day. STC and BID view this as a positive and high-profile community event capable of attracting visitors and generating significant activity within the town centre.

7. Officer Observations and Context

7.1 Consultation Observations

Officers acknowledge that concerns have been raised regarding the timing, extent and effectiveness of elements of the informal engagement undertaken prior to the Motorsport UK (MSUK) statutory consultation process.

In particular, some residents, parish councils and elected members considered that:

- earlier direct engagement with elected members would have been beneficial;
- wider community awareness could have been achieved earlier in the process;
- additional follow-up engagement with some parish councils may have been appropriate; and
- greater detail regarding proposed routes, timings and operational impacts could have been made available at an earlier stage.

Officers note, however, that the organiser's early engagement activity was principally focused on properties, businesses, farms and stakeholders considered most directly affected by the proposed closed-road and managed access routes whilst route development, traffic management arrangements and operational planning remained under development.

Officers have reviewed engagement records, correspondence and door-knocking logs provided by the organiser. Officers note that the engagement undertaken included direct property visits, leaflet distribution, meetings with residents and parish councils where requested, discussions regarding agricultural and business access requirements, and ongoing dialogue relating to site-specific operational concerns.

Officers are also aware of several examples where route amendments, operational changes or property-specific mitigation measures were developed in response to concerns raised during the consultation process, including matters relating to agricultural operations, business access and livestock movements.

Officers note that parish councils vary considerably in administrative capacity, communication arrangements and frequency of meetings, which may in some instances have affected the speed or extent of early engagement and wider dissemination of information within local communities.

Whilst officers recognise that some residents and stakeholders remain dissatisfied with elements of the consultation process, officers are satisfied that the organiser undertook a substantial programme of engagement over an extended period prior to and during the formal MSUK consultation stage, and that consultation and mitigation discussions remain ongoing at the time of writing.

Officers note that no specific Shropshire Council policy currently exists establishing a prescribed threshold of resident support or objection for temporary event-related road closures of this nature.

Consultation and mitigation discussions remain ongoing and are not considered concluded at the time of writing. The organiser has advised that further detailed route-specific

communication with residents and businesses and the wider communities would form part of the next stage of event planning should approval proceed.

Officers also note that temporary road closures associated with public events often require balancing the interests of the wider community with the temporary disruption experienced by affected residents, businesses and road users. In such circumstances, the principal consideration is whether impacts are proportionate in the context of the event and capable of being reasonably mitigated through planning, communication and operational management measures.

Comparable considerations routinely arise in relation to a range of events held within Shropshire, including:

- sporting events such as marathons, cycling events and road races;
- town centre festivals, fairs and parades;
- village fêtes and community events;
- the RAF Cosford Air Show; and
- charter fairs and similar events within market towns such as Shifnal and Ludlow.

Such events may involve temporary road closures, restricted access arrangements, noise, increased visitor numbers and operational disruption affecting residents, businesses, places of worship and local traffic movements.

Officers note that experience from these events generally demonstrates that early communication, clear publicity, advance warning, coordinated traffic management and property-specific access arrangements can substantially reduce operational difficulties and allow many affected parties to plan appropriately around temporary restrictions.

However, officers also recognise that certain businesses and rural operations — including agricultural activities and holiday accommodation providers — may experience more significant practical impacts than would typically arise in more urban event settings and that continued engagement and mitigation planning therefore remain particularly important in the context of the proposed event.

The organiser has advised that it wishes to continue working constructively with affected residents, businesses and landowners.

7.2 Route Suitability and Safety Context

A number of representations question the suitability of the proposed roads for closed-road motorsport activity due to factors including road width, bends, gradients, visibility, verge condition and the rural character of the surrounding area.

Officers note that the proposed event is a regulated competitive motorsport event operating under MSUK requirements specifically designed for closed-road rallying on rural highways.

The organiser has advised that:

- proposed stages have undergone independent route assessment;
- routes are required to comply with MSUK regulations and safety requirements;
- stage operation is subject to formal safety planning and oversight;

- dedicated safety vehicles inspect stages immediately prior to competitive operation; and
- all stages would operate under formal road closure conditions.

Officers are satisfied in principle that the proposed routes are capable of being assessed and operated within the MSUK regulatory framework applicable to closed-road rally events.

Officers further note that concerns relating solely to roads being narrow, winding or unfamiliar to competitors are not, in themselves, uncommon characteristics of rural roads used for closed-road rally stages, and are matters which the MSUK regulatory framework is intended to assess and manage within the context of the motorsport discipline proposed.

7.3 Resident, Business and Agricultural Access

Officers note that concerns regarding access for residents, farms and businesses are among the most significant operational issues raised within representations received.

Officers note that a number of site-specific operational concerns have been raised during the consultation and engagement process, including matters relating to agricultural operations, livestock movements, business access, tourism accommodation, localised highway conditions and property-specific access arrangements.

These have included concerns associated with:

- The Bottle and Glass Inn, Picklescott;
- Lane Farm, Wilderley;
- Wilderley Hall Farm dairy operations;
- holiday accommodation businesses adjacent to proposed routes;
- the recently repaired ford at Fullway;
- the Frogs Gutter / Knolls Farm area;
- Shropshire Forestry premises at Cound; and
- wider agricultural and livestock access requirements.

Officers further note that a number of these concerns have resulted in ongoing direct engagement between the organiser and affected parties, including route amendments, proposed access arrangements, operational mitigation measures and further site-specific discussions.

At the time of writing, officers are satisfied that many of the principal concerns identified to date appear to have either been dealt with, or are capable of mitigation or management through continued event planning and property-specific arrangements, although some matters remain subject to ongoing discussion and final operational agreement.

Officers would expect such engagement and mitigation planning to continue throughout the remaining event development process should approval proceed.

Officers recognise that some green routes may also serve operational functions associated with stage start, finish or vehicle movement areas. Accordingly, whilst routes may technically remain accessible at certain times, practical access conditions may vary depending upon operational activity and traffic volumes associated with the event.

CMC will issue passes to those on red and green routes to allow access for them or visitors when operationally appropriate. Handbooks will be issued which set out access systems, approximate timings and how to obtain assistance as well as real-time information about the event.

Notwithstanding these operational constraints, officers are satisfied that the organiser has engaged constructively regarding mitigation proposals and access arrangements to date and that further refinement of such arrangements would be expected as part of ongoing event development, and also note that examples exist where stage routing has already been amended in response to operational agricultural concerns, including rerouting associated with agricultural activity.

7.4 Environmental, Noise and Rural Character Considerations

A significant number of representations raise concerns regarding:

- noise;
- emissions and air pollution;
- wildlife disturbance;
- verge and hedgerow damage;
- impacts on the Shropshire Hills National Landscape;
- conflict with climate and biodiversity objectives; and
- perceived inconsistency with Shropshire Council's wider environmental policies.

Officers note that some degree of temporary disturbance is inherent within the operation of a closed-road motorsport event and that impacts relating to noise, traffic activity and visitor movements cannot be entirely eliminated.

The organiser has advised that:

- participating vehicles remain subject to MSUK technical and noise regulations;
- all competing vehicles are required to remain road legal;
- environmental and operational management plans are being developed; and
- spectator activity would be directed toward managed areas where possible.

Officers further note that:

- the event would take place over a single principal competition day;
- the competitive operation periods are temporary and intermittent in nature;
- the proposed event forms part of a nationally regulated motorsport framework specifically intended to permit such activity under controlled conditions.

7.5 Environmental mitigation and sustainability

The organiser has provided officers with draft environmental and sustainability information relating to the proposed event.

The information provided indicates that the organiser is seeking to:

- monitor and reduce the operational environmental impact of the event where practicable;

- encourage the use of synthetic or bio-fuels by officials and competitors where available;
- minimise printed documentation through digital systems;
- undertake post-event inspections and remediation where necessary;
- develop a waste and litter management plan;
- develop environmental monitoring and reporting arrangements; and
- identify opportunities for local environmental or biodiversity-related partnership activity.

The organiser has further advised that the event operates within MSUK sustainability frameworks and has referenced MSUK sustainability accreditation arrangements.

Officers further note that some proposed environmental mitigation measures, including carbon offsetting and environmental counterbalance initiatives, are regarded by some objectors and commentators as insufficient or lacking meaningful long-term impact in the context of motorsport activity.

However, the organiser has advised that comparable events have previously worked with local wildlife, biodiversity and environmental organisations in order to develop locally targeted mitigation or enhancement initiatives intended to provide practical environmental benefit within host areas. Officers understand that discussions regarding similar opportunities within Shropshire remain at an early stage and would require further development should the event proceed.

Notwithstanding this, officers consider it relevant that environmental mitigation and sustainability considerations are being actively incorporated into the organiser's planning process.

7.6 Economic and Community Considerations

Officers consider it likely that the event would generate wider economic activity within Shropshire associated with:

- visitor accommodation;
- hospitality;
- fuel sales;
- food and beverage businesses; and
- broader visitor expenditure over the event weekend.

Officers note that the scale of direct economic benefit within the immediate stage-route areas is more difficult to quantify and may vary considerably depending upon local participation and spectator behaviour and availability of local amenities.

The organiser has advised that local landowners, businesses and parish councils are encouraged to establish spectator parking, viewing or hospitality facilities where desired locally and operationally appropriate.

Officers further note that Department for Transport assessments associated with the introduction of closed-road motorsport legislation recognised that such events may generate

localised economic and visitor benefits for host areas, whilst also concluding that wider national economic effects were likely to be relatively modest overall.

Officers are also aware of economic assessment work undertaken in relation to comparable UK closed-road rally events, including the Jim Clark Rally in Scotland, which estimated approximately £1.2m of visitor expenditure associated with the event weekend. Officers note, however, that the scale of economic impact arising from such events is influenced by factors including event maturity, spectator attendance, duration and the availability of local tourism and hospitality infrastructure, and direct comparison with the proposed Shropshire event is therefore necessarily limited.

7.6A Community Benefit and Legacy Considerations

The organiser has stated that the proposed event is intended not only as a sporting activity but also as a wider visitor and community event capable of generating local economic and community-related benefits.

The organiser has further advised that local landowners, businesses and parish councils are encouraged to participate in the event through:

- provision of spectator parking;
- establishment of managed viewing areas;
- temporary catering or hospitality activity; and
- other visitor-related opportunities associated with spectator attendance.

Officers note that such opportunities may provide some limited localised economic benefit, although the extent to which such benefits would materialise is difficult to quantify and may vary considerably between locations.

CMC has advised that comparable events organised by the club have historically included financial contributions or donations to local community groups and voluntary organisations associated with host areas. The organiser has indicated that, across a number of previous events, such contributions have exceeded £10,000 in aggregate.

However, officers note that a number of representations received question the scale and significance of such contributions when considered across multiple communities and over a number of years, and do not regard these benefits as sufficient to offset the perceived disruption associated with the proposed event.

The organiser has further advised that it has generally sought to avoid placing undue emphasis upon financial contributions or commercial opportunities associated with the event in order to avoid any perception that communities or parish councils are being improperly influenced through offers of funding or revenue-generating activity linked to the event.

The organiser has also advised that the event seeks to encourage longer-term visitor engagement with Shropshire through increased regional visibility and tourism exposure associated with the event should it return to Shropshire in future years.

Officers recognise that views differ considerably regarding the extent to which such wider community or economic benefits offset the temporary impacts and disruption associated with the proposed event.

7.7 Spectator Management and Public Access

At the time of writing, detailed spectator management arrangements remain under development. This is unsurprising given that:

- final route approval has not yet been given by Shropshire Council;
- operational planning remains ongoing; and
- spectator management proposals would ordinarily continue to evolve during the months preceding an event.

Draft proposals discussed to date include:

- designated spectator areas;
- managed parking locations;
- advance event signage;
- directional signing;
- PRow management arrangements;
- communication with walking and rambling groups; and
- liaison with local landowners and parish councils.

Where spectator areas are agreed with a parish council or landowner, CMC will advise and assist with MSUK safety rules, the running of that location will be in the hands of the parish or landowner. CMC will advertise on website, social media etc these locations and suitable pre-agreed routes to get to these locations.

Both officers and the organiser have identified unmanaged roadside parking and informal spectator congregation as an operational risk requiring continued development of mitigation measures.

Officers note that local landowners and parish councils may possess valuable local knowledge regarding suitable spectator and parking locations and may therefore play a useful role in the development of managed arrangements.

Additional liaison with policing partners may also be required as planning develops.

7.8 Distinction Between Regulated Closed-Road Events and Informal Motorsport Activity

During discussions with officers, some representations have referred to previous “night rally” or informal motorsport activity within rural areas which were considered to be locally acceptable.

Officers consider it important to distinguish between:

- formally permitted and regulated closed-road motorsport events operating under MSUK governance arrangements; and
- informal, uninsured, unauthorised or non-permitted vehicle activity on the public highway.

The proposed Hills Ford Stages Rally would operate under:

- a MSUK permit;
- formal road closure arrangements;
- approved safety planning;
- regulated competition and technical rules;
- insured event arrangements;
- organised traffic management; and
- coordinated emergency planning and marshal provision.

Officers therefore do not consider comparisons with informal or unauthorised motorsport activity on open public roads to be directly equivalent to the current proposal.

8. Key Risks

8.1 Overview

The proposed event presents a number of operational, reputational and community-related risks which would require ongoing management should the event proceed.

Officers note that many of the identified risks are not unusual for major temporary events involving road closures and significant visitor movement, particularly within rural areas with constrained highway networks and dispersed communities.

The principal identified risks are summarised below.

8.2 Resident, Business and Agricultural Access Risk

A significant proportion of representations received relate to concerns regarding access for:

- residents;
- farms and agricultural operations;
- holiday accommodation;
- local businesses; and
- operational vehicle movements.

Particular concerns raised include:

- practical accessibility during live stage operation;
- movement of agricultural machinery and livestock;
- milk tanker and commercial vehicle access;
- emergency or other welfare access for residents;
- veterinary access requirements;
- visitor arrival and departure difficulties;
- cancellation of accommodation due to the presence of the rally event; and
- uncertainty regarding managed access arrangements.

Officers note that the proposed event takes place during a period which may remain operationally sensitive for parts of the agricultural sector, including:

- movement of agricultural machinery;
- livestock management;
- feed and supply deliveries; and
- general seasonal farm operations.

Whilst officers note that some representations suggest the proposed date may fall between particular harvesting or shooting periods, it is recognised that agricultural practices, weather dependency and land use arrangements vary considerably between farms and locations.

Officers further note that rural farming operations are often interconnected, with:

- land rented or sub-let between farms;
- shared agricultural access arrangements;

- contractors operating across multiple holdings; and
- livestock or machinery movements extending beyond immediately adjacent properties.

Accordingly, officers consider that operational impacts may extend beyond properties located directly on the proposed red or green routes themselves.

The organiser has advised that managed access arrangements form a central part of the proposed mitigation strategy and that a number of site-specific access discussions have already taken place, including discussions relating to commercial or agricultural vehicle access, livestock and other property-specific requirements.

The organiser has further advised that emergency access and animal welfare situations would be accommodated wherever required, including veterinary access where necessary.

However, officers further note that:

- some green routes may also perform operational functions associated with rally vehicle movements;
- practical accessibility may vary throughout the day depending upon event activity; and
- final operational details continue to evolve.

Officers therefore consider that continued engagement with agricultural businesses, landowners and rural operators — including some located beyond the immediately affected route frontage — will be necessary as operational planning develops further.

Accordingly, there remains a residual risk of access disruption, misunderstanding or dissatisfaction notwithstanding proposed mitigation arrangements.

Officers further note that representations from a holiday accommodation provider raises concerns regarding the compatibility of the proposed event with the quiet rural environment promoted to visitors within the area. These include potential booking cancellations, requests for compensation, visitor dissatisfaction and perceived reputational impacts associated with noise, traffic restrictions or disruption during the event period.

Officers recognise that such impacts may affect some tourism and hospitality businesses differently depending upon their location, customer expectations and proximity to live stages or managed access routes. However, officers also note that the proposed event duration is limited and that advance publicity and clearer operational information may assist accommodation providers and visitors in planning appropriately prior to the event.

Officers further note that, whilst some businesses may perceive the event as detrimental to their normal trading environment, others may identify potential opportunities associated with increased visitor activity, spectator attendance and event-related demand during the period.

8.3 Spectator Management and Highway Network Risk

The proposed event may attract significant spectator activity across rural areas with limited parking infrastructure and constrained road networks.

Potential risks include:

- unmanaged roadside parking;
- obstruction of narrow rural lanes;
- congestion associated with spectator movement;
- unsafe pedestrian activity adjacent to live stages;
- trespass over private land;
- informal viewing locations developing outside managed areas; and
- disruption to non-event highway users.

Officers note that spectator management proposals remain under development and are expected to evolve further should the event proceed.

The organiser has advised that:

- designated spectator and parking areas are intended to be set up where possible;
- local landowners and parish councils may assist in identifying suitable locations;
- event signage and public information arrangements are being developed; and
- liaison with policing partners would continue regarding traffic and operational management.

Notwithstanding these measures, officers consider unmanaged spectator behaviour and associated parking activity to remain a foreseeable operational risk requiring continued mitigation planning. Officers also intend to engage with other local authorities which have hosted comparable closed-road rally events in order to better understand the operational measures, traffic management approaches and community mitigation arrangements adopted elsewhere, and to identify any relevant lessons or good practice which may assist in the ongoing development of the proposed event arrangements within Shropshire.

8.4 Protest, Obstruction and Event Disruption Risk

Officers note that a number of representations express strong opposition to the proposed event and that community feeling in certain areas appears significant.

Accordingly, officers consider there to be a potential risk of:

- attempted obstruction of stages or access points;
- disruption associated with protest activity;
- refusal to comply with traffic management arrangements; or
- operational delays arising from disputes or confrontation at closure points.

The organiser has advised that:

- contingency arrangements are being developed;
- stewarding and security provision would form part of operational planning;
- liaison with policing partners is ongoing;
- marshals and stage commanders would operate coordinated communication arrangements; and
- MSUK safety procedures permit stage suspension or cancellation where operational safety is compromised.

Officers further note that any significant obstruction or operational disruption occurring on the day of the event could:

- affect public safety;
- delay emergency access;
- impact resident access arrangements;
- require police intervention; and/or
- result in stage delay, suspension or cancellation.

Continued monitoring of community concerns and operational resilience would therefore be necessary should the event proceed.

8.5 Safety and Traffic Management Risk

The proposed event involves temporary conversion of rural highways into regulated competitive motorsport stages. Risks associated with such activity include:

- failure or inadequacy of traffic management arrangements;
- unauthorised public access onto live stages;
- vehicle incidents;
- communication failures;
- marshal deployment issues;
- emergency response delays; and
- interaction between competitive activity and managed access movements.

Officers note that:

- a draft safety plan has been provided and will continue to evolve;
- Safety Advisory Group (SAG) consultation is ongoing;
- dedicated medical provision is proposed for each stage;
- formal route inspections and safety car procedures are proposed;
- Other similar events have and continue to take place across the UK; and
- MSUK regulatory requirements apply throughout the event.

At the time of writing, officers have no indication that an acceptable final Traffic Management Plan could not be developed. However, detailed operational review and multi-agency coordination remain ongoing.

Officers note that, should the event proceed, its safe operation would necessarily require cooperation between organisers, marshals, residents, businesses, landowners and other affected parties in complying with road closure and safety arrangements.

The organiser has advised that stewarding, marshal deployment and communication arrangements would be in place throughout the event in order to identify and respond to operational or safety issues arising on or adjacent to the live stages.

Officers further note that affected residents, landowners and agricultural operators would be expected to take reasonable precautions in relation to the management of vehicles,

livestock, working animals and other activities occurring in close proximity to live stage routes during operational closure periods.

The organiser has advised that emergency access and welfare-related situations would continue to be managed operationally.

8.6 Environmental and Reputational Risk

The event has generated objections relating to:

- environmental impact;
- climate considerations;
- noise;
- verge and road condition damage; and
- impacts on wildlife and tranquillity;

Officers note that even where operational mitigation is implemented successfully, some temporary environmental and amenity impacts are likely unavoidable during the operation of a closed-road motorsport event.

There therefore remains a reputational risk to the Authority associated with:

- perceived inconsistency between the event and wider environmental policy objectives;
- dissatisfaction amongst affected communities;
- criticism relating to consultation and communication; and
- public/media scrutiny associated with the event.

Officers further note that refusal of the event may also attract criticism from:

- supporters of motorsport activity;
- businesses anticipating visitor-related economic benefit; and
- stakeholders supportive of major visitor events within the county.

8.7 Highway Condition and Infrastructure Risk

A number of representations express concern regarding:

- existing highway condition;
- potholes;
- verge damage;
- edge deterioration; and
- the suitability of rural lanes for competitive vehicle activity.

The organiser has advised that:

- routes are assessed for suitability under MSUK requirements;
- pre-event inspections would take place;
- pre- and post-event highway issues would be reviewed in liaison with SCH; and
- arrangements regarding remedial works would be agreed where appropriate.

There remains a residual risk of additional localised carriageway or verge damage associated with the event and associated spectator activity.

CMC is committed to collaborating closely with SCH both before and after the event to minimise any potential impact on road conditions and to carry out full remediation where required. The organisers further note that previous events have led to improvements in road conditions, as localised repairs are frequently conducted immediately prior to the stages.

8.8 Programme and Delivery Risk

The organiser has advised that timely determination of the proposed road closure arrangements is important in order to:

- progress detailed operational planning;
- finalise traffic management arrangements;
- continue resident engagement;
- establish spectator management arrangements;
- secure contractor and volunteer commitments;
- commence event publicity and competitor entry processes;
- ensure hospitality arrangements can be made in good time by the competitors and supporters; and
- support wider logistical planning.

Officers note that prolonged uncertainty may itself create operational and communication difficulties for:

- residents;
- businesses;
- event organisers;
- partner agencies; and
- the Authority.

Officers further note that associated activities linked to the wider event programme are already in development, including planned engagement activity with Shrewsbury Colleges Group, Harper Adams University and the University of Gloucestershire relating to motorsport, engineering, media and associated technical disciplines.

The organiser has also advised that significant time, financial resource and organisational effort has already been invested in consultation, route development and operational planning over an extended period.

However, officers further note that approval of the event prior to satisfactory resolution of key operational matters may increase delivery, operational and reputational risk to the Authority.

Accordingly, continued detailed review and refinement of operational, safety and mitigation arrangements would remain necessary should the event proceed.

9. Options Available to the Authority

The organiser has advised that a decision is required within a relatively short timeframe in order to support event planning and viability. This includes:

- publication and promotion of the event;
- opening of competitor entries;
- accommodation and logistics arrangements;
- procurement of suppliers and contractors;
- marshal recruitment and training;
- finalisation of safety and traffic management planning, including development of traffic management, parking and spectator locations.

Prolonged uncertainty may affect the organiser's ability to deliver the event as proposed, irrespective of the eventual determination regarding the road closure order.

Option 1 – Approve Subject to Conditions

Potential conditions:

- traffic management plan approval;
- resident access arrangements;
- emergency planning requirements;
- environmental mitigation;
- marshal/stewarding arrangements;
- reinstatement/inspection requirements;
- communications plan.

These are all elements expected to be developed and finalised as part of the ongoing event planning.

Option 2 – Request Further Information / Defer

Potential requirements around:

- further consultation;
- revised mitigation proposals;
- additional operational detail;
- specific business/farm access arrangements.

Officers note that additional consultation may not materially alter existing views and that representations relating to major public events are often more strongly expressed by those opposed to the proposals. Officers further note that many of the remaining mitigation and access matters relate primarily to properties or businesses directly affected by the proposed routes and would, in any event, be expected to continue evolving as part of the detailed operational planning process should the event proceed.

Officers presently consider that sufficient operational information has been provided at this stage to enable determination in principle, recognising that further refinement and

development of detailed arrangements would ordinarily continue throughout the event planning period.

Option 3 – Decline to Make the Order

Potential considerations may include:

- unresolved operational concerns;
- inability to mitigate impacts adequately;
- unacceptable disruption or access implications for affected residents, businesses or agricultural operations;
- environmental or community impacts considered disproportionate to the nature and duration of the event; and
- wider public interest considerations.

Officers note that refusal of the proposed road closure order(s) would prevent the closed-road stages of the event from proceeding within Shropshire irrespective of the Motorsport UK permit already issued.

Officers further note that refusal may be considered appropriate where the Authority concludes that the operational, safety, environmental or community impacts associated with the event cannot be reasonably mitigated or managed to an acceptable level.

However, officers also note that many of the concerns raised through consultation relate to matters capable, at least in principle, of mitigation through ongoing operational planning, communication and property-specific management arrangements. Officers further recognise that temporary inconvenience, disruption or objection associated with public events does not necessarily, in itself, preclude the making of temporary road closure orders where impacts are considered proportionate and appropriately managed.

10. Officer Recommendation

10.1 Role of the Authority

Shropshire Council does not formally “approve” events in their entirety. The Authority’s role is instead to consider specific statutory and operational matters associated with the proposal, including whether it is appropriate to make the Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) and associated traffic management arrangements required to facilitate the event on the public highway.

Officers further note that the Shropshire Safety Advisory Group (SAG) is an advisory and multi-agency coordination body comprising representatives from relevant Council services, emergency services and other partner agencies. SAG does not itself formally approve events but provides a mechanism through which operational, safety, traffic management and emergency planning matters may be reviewed and coordinated.

Accordingly, whilst no single SAG “approval” exists, progression of an event would ordinarily be dependent upon relevant agencies and responsible bodies being satisfied, within their respective areas of responsibility, that appropriate operational and safety arrangements are in place.

10.2 Officer Assessment of the Proposed Road Closures

Officers note that the proposed event would be temporary and time-limited in nature, with competitive stage operation occurring over a single principal event day and individual stage closures operating intermittently throughout that day.

In considering the representations received, officers consider it necessary to assess not only the nature of the impacts identified, but also their likely scale, duration, geographic extent and the extent to which such impacts are capable of mitigation through operational planning, communication and management measures.

Having reviewed the information presently available, officers are satisfied, from a technical and operational perspective that the proposed event is capable in principle of proceeding within the applicable legislative and regulatory framework governing closed-road motorsport events.

CMC have fulfilled the statutory requirements under the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 and the Road Traffic Act 1988 to allow the Authority to make a motor race order and temporary traffic restriction order.

In reaching this view, officers note in particular that:

- Motorsport UK has issued a permit for the proposed event following completion of the required consultation and assessment processes;
- the organiser has undertaken both informal and formal consultation processes;
- ongoing engagement and mitigation discussions continue with affected stakeholders;
- draft safety, traffic management and emergency planning arrangements have been provided;
- Safety Advisory Group consultation is ongoing;

- the proposed routes have been assessed within the MSUK regulatory framework for closed-road rally events;
- managed access and operational mitigation proposals continue to be developed; and
- no fundamental technical or operational issue has presently been identified which officers consider incapable of mitigation through appropriate planning, management or conditional control, or communication and engagement.

Officers further note that:

- the proposed event remains subject to continuing refinement of operational arrangements;
- certain site-specific access and mitigation matters remain under discussion;
- spectator management arrangements continue to evolve;
- ongoing liaison with partner agencies, residents, businesses and parish councils remains necessary;
- Shropshire Council may set conditions against the Orders issued to help define expectations before, during and after the event; and
- detailed operational approval processes would continue should the event proceed.

Accordingly, officers are satisfied that CMC have met on statutory, technical and operational grounds the requirements to allow the Authority to make of the necessary motor race and road closure order(s) associated with the proposed event.

However, officers also recognise that the proposal has generated significant public interest and opposition within certain affected communities and that a number of issues raised extend beyond purely technical or operational considerations into broader matters of community impact, environmental perception and public policy.

Approval of the present application would not create any automatic entitlement to future events or road closure applications, each of which would require separate consideration on its own merits. Officers further note that some Members have suggested the proposed event may, in effect, provide an opportunity to assess how such an event operates in practice within Shropshire, including its management, impacts and potential benefits.

Officers therefore consider that the determination of whether the Authority should proceed with the making of the necessary road closure order(s) may appropriately require consideration at senior management and/or Cabinet level.

Officers further note that timely determination is vital in order to:

- provide certainty to affected residents and businesses;
- allow continued operational planning and mitigation development;
- support ongoing engagement activity;
- enable completion of detailed safety and traffic management arrangements; and
- allow the organiser to progress the wider logistical and operational requirements associated with delivery of the event.

Officers therefore recommend that the matter be considered further at senior management and/or Cabinet level at the earliest reasonably practicable opportunity.

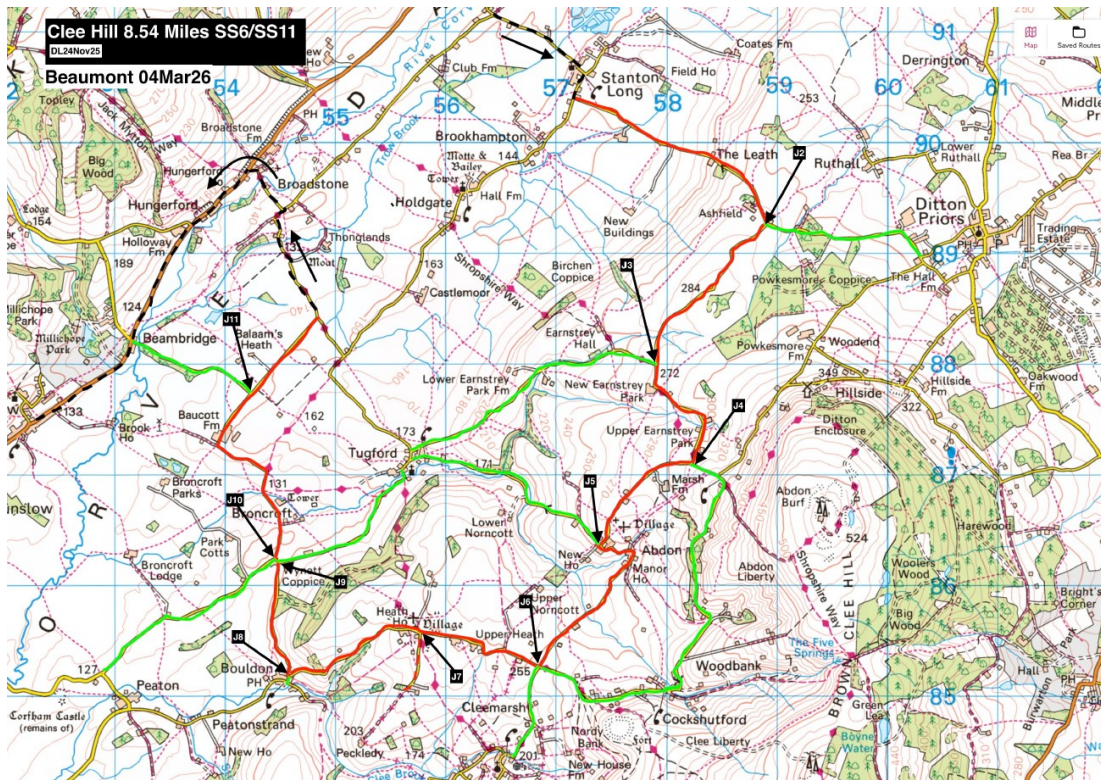
12. Appendices

Available separately if required

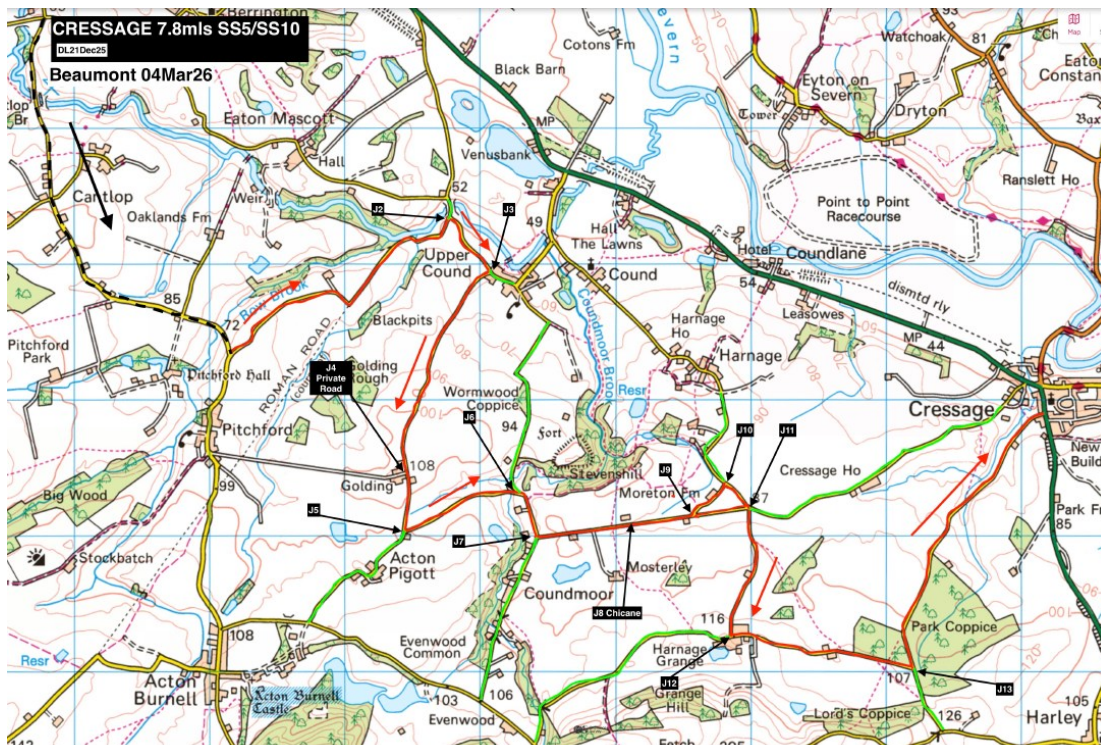
- route maps and stage diagrams (See next page for overviews);
- summary spreadsheet of representations;
- Motorsport UK permit;
- insurance documents;
- draft traffic management overview;
- environmental information;
- draft Public Rights of Way plan;
- organiser correspondence and responses.

Route maps

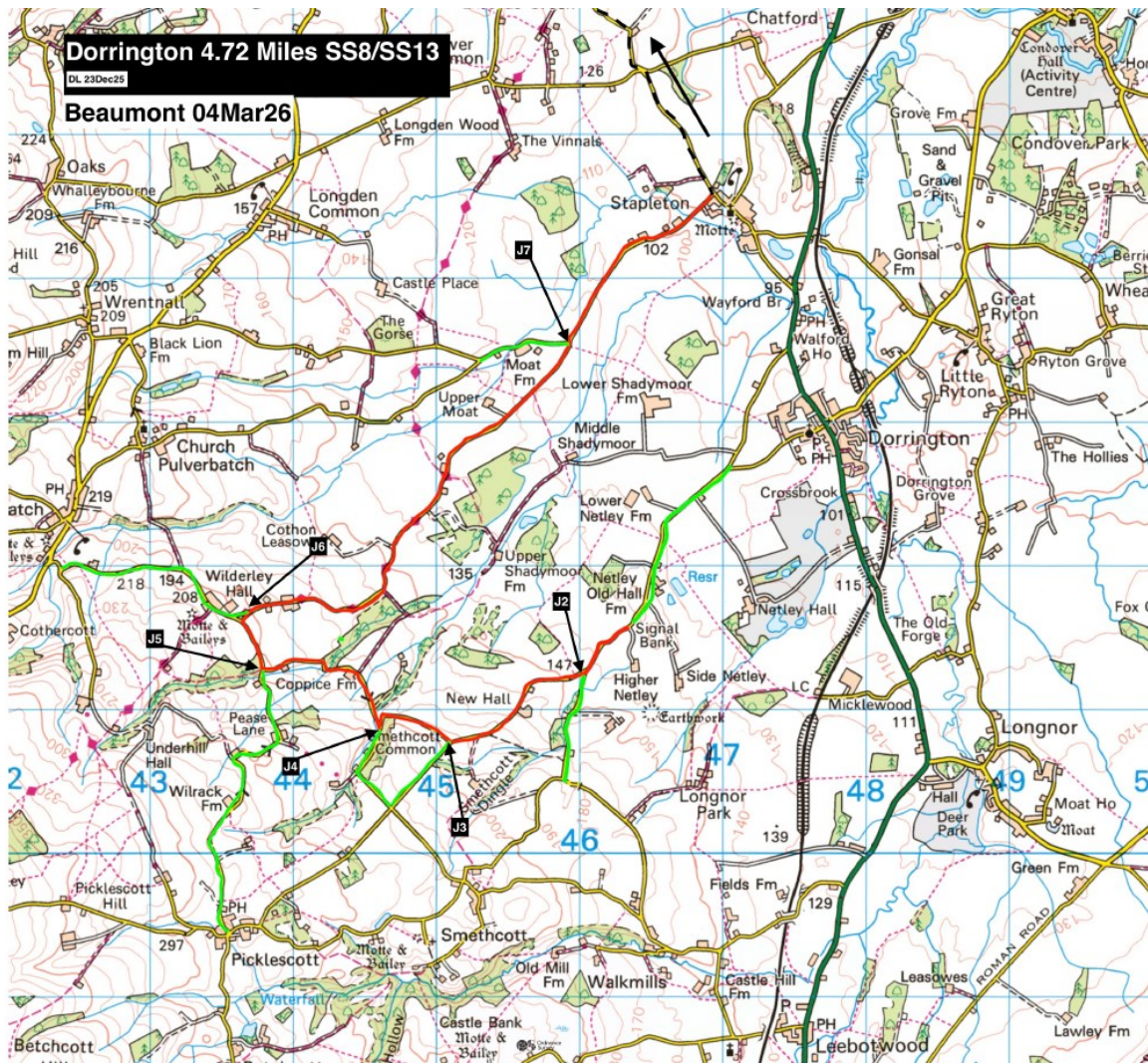
Clee Hill



Cressage:



Dorrington:



Lawley:

