

## CABINET – 10 JUNE 2026

### REPSONSES TO MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

#### 1. Councillor Chris Lemon

Shropshire is a predominantly rural county with a commensurately low population density, yet it is also a county where many residents rely on public transport. Unfortunately, Shropshire also has one of the poorest bus networks in the country, and in recent years has struggled badly to attract the funding made available by central government to improve such services. Part of the reason for that is that previous administrations have never prioritised public transport and did the bare minimum to support it, something no doubt that central government noticed and took into account when allocating funds, leading to the kind of death spiral that means Shrewsbury must be the only county town in the country with no public transport in the evenings or on Sundays and Bank Holidays. That being the case, the Shropshire Transport Strategy could be an important step in the right direction, showing those holding the purse strings in central government that the county is now serious about improving public transport and most especially bus service. Council was expecting that report to be published by now after the Cabinet member for Transport and Economic Growth (as he then was) said it, "should be made publicly available during next month" in answer to a question for Cabinet on March the 11<sup>th</sup>. When will the Strategy be published and what is the reason for the delay?

#### Response from Councillor Rob Wilson:

Public transport is a vital service for connecting communities. As you say in your question, it has faced a lack of prioritisation and real investment for some time. Turning that around will take time, and significant funding. At present that level is not available. As I have stated before in the last financial year, the council had £3.07 million available to support and improve the bus network. This has been reduced to £2.86 million for this year and is expected to remain at this level over the next few years. That means that to achieve the ambition we have, we must attempt to do more with less, and operating in a different way. The Shrewsbury Night Bus trial is a good example, it was initially funded by the Big Town Plan partnership and then extending by the Police and Crime. We have worked with local members and operators where timetables weren't working for people. However, we can't get around the fact that we have less money to spend on supporting bus services than the council had in the past.

The commissioned Shrewsbury Public Transport Strategy which I spoke about in March is an attempt to consider what is achievable alongside the Movement and Public Strategy. One supports the other. So it's important that the council understands the costs and timeline involved in delivering key elements of both. This work is going on at present, and that's why we have asked for a delay in publishing the strategy, for which I apologise, so that when available for scrutiny it includes how elements can be implemented.

#### 2. Councillor Rosemary Dartnall

There has for many years been an issue with speeding traffic on the outer section of London Road, from the college to Emstrey Roundabout, which currently has a 40 mph limit. This was always of particular concern for residents leaving home by car from the old smallholdings. When planning permission was sought for the development of 135 new homes here, an extension of the 30 mph speed limit was requested, from the college, past the new homes and up to the junction with the Weir Hill access road. This was, and remains, perfectly reasonable given the increased number of homes with access directly onto this busy arterial road. The development has installed cabling to enable streetlights where the new homes have entrances onto London Road: lighting will add road safety for residents walking, cycling or driving from home. The streetlights have never been installed. The speed limit has not been changed. Why?

There are regular reports of near misses here – the most recent involving a motorcycle and a car at the Weir Hill junction. As part of the LCWIP plan, a toucan crossing is also required, either at this junction or farther along close to the cricket club. How else will residents of all ages in existing and new homes manage to leave home safely and cross London Road without some infrastructure to make doing so safe?

Please can the portfolio holder confirm that these simple and necessary road safety amendments are carried out urgently, before a fatality occurs?

Response from Councillor David Vasmer:

I will arrange for the Executive Manager for Strategic Transport to look at the legacy of any S.106 Agreements, CIL requests and LCWIP requirements around this issue to identify synergy with workstreams and funding. When we have a coherent position, we will report back to the Member for Column and Sutton. In the meantime, the Exec Manager will arrange for a speed survey on London Road from the college to Emstrey Roundabout, the data will assist with any decision making.

### 3. Councillor Dawn Husemann

Despite waiting for months for a meeting to discuss next steps relating to Shirehall we have been unable to obtain specific information relating to the Shirehall review that we require. So in this public and recorded forum we ask:

- What is the start date of the review?
- What methodology will be used to complete the review?
- When will the report be made available to members?
- When will Mr Buss meet with the task and finish group?
- Exactly how will Mr Buss explore the viability of the JV route, we require detail of the methodology, clarity of the results and a clear explanation of the thought process and justification of how conclusions are reached.
- Please also explain how a definitive conclusion can be reached when we do not know the real world net value of the site and this figure will not be known until the red book valuation is done which will be after a decision is reached?
- If the real world net value achievable by the council is less than predicted by the soft market testing will this council halt any sale or will it accept significant losses on the sale of this wholly owned strategic asset?

Response from Councillor Roger Evans:

- What is the start date of the review?

After the Directors had met and duly considered the decision of the Council meeting held on May 14th.

- What methodology will be used to complete the review?

View to be taken by the reviewer on basis of their experience of local government development, property acquisition, sales and disposals, regeneration schemes, housing, and LG Finance

- When will the report be made available to members?

Together with publication of Cabinet report if not before

- When will Mr Buss meet with the task and finish group?

Mr Buss is not holding interviews as part of his brief; rather he is considering all Council and Cabinet papers to date referring to Shire Hall and that includes the report of the Task and Finish Group. His report is currently being fact checked by the s151 Officer and colleagues where appropriate. His report is currently in final draft and is expected to be completed by the beginning of next week.

- Exactly how will Mr Buss explore the viability of the JV route, we require detail of the methodology, clarity of the results and a clear explanation of the thought process and justification of how conclusions are reached.

This will be set out in his report, although it should be noted that the viability of any JV route could only truly be evaluated as part of a market tested option or options. It should also be noted that for any potential JV, as appropriate, would need to understand the extent of resource requirements both professional and financial from the Council which are clearly very limited.

- Please also explain how a definitive conclusion can be reached when we do not know the real-world net value of the site and this figure will not be known until the red book valuation is done which will be after a decision is reached

This I expect will be set out in Cabinet report.

- If the real-world net value achievable by the council is less than predicted by the soft market testing will this council halt any sale or will it accept significant losses on the sale of this wholly owned strategic asset?

The Council is of course the sovereign body, but the result has been handed over the cabinet to consider and make a decision The report is expected to cover this issue.

#### 4. Councillor Susan Coleman

For the sake of transparency will the Leader please clarify the following:

- Is Guildhall fit for purpose such that it can meet all the council's accommodations needs in the medium to long term, would this be with or without significant investment?
- If it's not fit for purpose in the medium to long term what specifically does the council intend to do to meet the council's future accommodation needs?
- If the council pursues its aim to destroy Shirehall which is a wholly owned asset with no borrowings currently against it, which could be repurposed, will the Leader please confirm that they will not borrow any money to build new accommodation and we will remain at Guildhall indefinitely.
- If Guildhall is not fit for purpose and new accommodation is planned in the medium to long term please explain to Shropshire residents how it is acceptable to destroy a prestigious and valuable asset that is free from borrowings to borrow more money to build a new but vastly inferior solution to our accommodation needs.

Response from Councillor Heather Kidd

In the short to medium term, the Guildhall provides a suitable headquarters for the Council and we continue to adapt to the configuration of the building and we will also continue to make minor adaptations to the site in line with our needs and to encourage more staff back to the office. The Guildhall is providing us with valuable benefits at this time, allowing us to increase officer presence on-site and now ensures that there are dedicated spaces for teams throughout the week. This arrangement is considered fit for purpose and forms a key part of our transition towards more modern, efficient ways of working.

The building is fit for purpose to meet current needs, although as for any office accommodation it is recognised that facilities and access can always be improved. It is noted that any early change from the Guildhall is necessarily constrained by the financial emergency that we face and the potential cost of any future movement to alternative accommodation were it available.

These issues will be addressed by the Cabinet report on 14<sup>th</sup> July, not least the imperative for the Council to generate capital receipts from the disposal of sites in the Council's portfolio in order to reduce the borrowing necessary to support Exceptional Financial Support and the costs of maintain such sites in an unused condition.

There is no plan to build new office accommodation to act as the Council's headquarters

5. Councillor Peter Husemann

Before the last election, a sum of £4.5 million was allocated within the CIL Local budget specifically for improvements to Bridgnorth High Street. As you know, this charming town is in desperate need of these funds. Its appearance is becoming increasingly tired and scruffy, which has led to growing frustration among my residents. We have made repeated requests for clarification on the status of this CIL local funding from the relevant officers, but unfortunately, we have still not received a reply.

Bridgnorth both needs and deserves this much needed financial support. I am now seeking a clear answer on whether the Liberal Democrats intend to withdraw this funding from Bridgnorth or not. While it's understood that the original project will need to be rescoped to suit current and future requirements, particularly in light of the significant

proposed developments around Bridgnorth, it's crucial that we begin what is likely to be a lengthy process to reinvigorate our much-loved town.

Please provide myself and all the residents of Bridgnorth and our surrounding villages with the clarity our community deserves

#### Response from Councillor David Walker

For clarity, £4.5m of CIL Local Funding has not been allocated to fund improvements to Bridgnorth High Street. A sum of £4.5m was included in the potential pipeline capital programme to deliver a multi-storey car park in the town, although no funding mechanism was identified at the time of its inclusion within the pipeline. This car park project is no longer proceeding, and therefore will need to be considered for removal from the pipeline capital programme in due course.

CIL funds are intended to be used to mitigate the cumulative impacts of development on an area. In December 2025, £75,002 of CIL Local funding was allocated to providing additional highway signage on key entry routes into Bridgnorth to support existing directional signage. The objective of this advisory route signing scheme is to reduce the amount of traffic passing through the Pound Street, Salop Street and Whitburn Street junction and to achieve a corresponding improvement in air quality at this location.

Following the recommendation of the Transformation and Oversight Scrutiny Committee report in April, the Council will prepare an Annual CIL Strategy in order to set the overall direction and prioritisation of CIL funds. There will be a need to identify appropriate infrastructure improvements in Bridgnorth resulting from recent and planned development in the area, and officers are committed to working with both Cabinet and local members in preparing the strategy as part of the wider commitment to improving communications and awareness of CIL matters.

#### 6. Councillor Thomas Clayton

There are a range of RAG and other colour ratings used across these reports and other committee agendas which are not clearly defined, so can you set out what criteria are actually being applied when deciding whether something is green, amber, red or otherwise, how that is applied consistently across different service areas, and whether there is a single standard approach used across the council or if individual departments are applying their own judgement, as we have seen in previous agendas, like the F&I agenda, where a variance in excess of 3000% in HR was still rated as amber rather than red, so can you please explain how those sorts of outcomes arise, explain why similar levels of variance have been judged differently, and given members have only around 72 hours to review the agenda before submitting questions, can you confirm how the approach is clear, consistent and robust enough for members to have confidence in the ratings being presented?

#### Response from Councillor Heather Kidd

RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings are a common way to report both performance and delivery. They are used to identify performance against Key Performance Indicators and targets, realisation of outcomes, and delivery against milestones.

As such, there will be different thresholds and definitions which determine the RAG status across these activities.

There is no single nationally mandated methodology for RAG rating values in performance management across all local authorities in England - although there are widely accepted practices and guidance that many councils follow. This will be tailored to the council's local context and typically involve setting tolerance thresholds around performance targets.

Good practice is that there is a definition of the RAG ratings being used, and we use the following to report on performance against the Shropshire Plan Performance Indicators:

**Green:** Performance is meeting or exceeding the target. Typically, within 0–5% of the target (or better).

**Amber:** Performance is slightly below the target. Typically, within 5–10% below the target.

**Red:** Performance is significantly below the target. Typically, more than 10% below the target.

These definitions are set out in the FAQs in the full Shropshire Plan dashboard.

Whilst the council applies these standard tolerances as a default, it also customises RAG methods for certain metrics based on priorities, risk, and stakeholder needs. Since metrics vary (for example, some use small numbers), a fixed tolerance like +/- 5% will not always be suitable. As a result, service areas set specific KPI tolerances, and some KPIs are red if they simply miss their target.

For Improvement Plan delivery, the direction of travel is RAG-rated to help demonstrate the progress of programme delivery, normally defined by milestones being met and overall confidence of delivery ratings. These will be informed by internal monitoring and assurance reports by the Programme Management Office. The basis of the RAG ratings used in the Improvement Plan update is set out at Appendix 1 in the report:

- **Green:** on track/delivered
- **Amber:** some slippage (planned or managed)
- **Red:** off track (unplanned or not mitigated)

### Questions raised as part of Agenda Item 20 – Hills Ford Rally

#### 1. Question from Councillor Chris Naylor

I'm very concerned to see the Hills Fords Stages Rally listed for decision. Personally I'm neutral, though it was cancelled in Herefordshire after many officer questions remained unanswered. Two of my parishes welcome the Rally and have my support.

But my very rural Pulverbatch residents and their Parish Council have repeatedly expressed strong opposition to 'closed road sections' there – where public and residents are excluded, no speed limits apply – in dozens of considered objections, and Parish Council motions, consistently for many months.

It's of course my job as councillor for Burnell to advise my residents, and I was repeatedly told, from the highest level in the Council down, that a particular Highways officer would decide.

The Parish Council and I therefore expressed opposition to him in February, and I was emailed by this officer's superior (24/2 9.38am) to confirm that objections had been received and – I quote - 'he won't approve any road closures in their parish'.

We ensured those dozens of resident objections – including farms straddling the proposed closed route, holiday lets, nature recovery champions – were forwarded to the officer, his superior and the Leader.

So:

- Have those objections reached him?
- Have relevant concerns raised by Herefordshire been considered?
- Has 'due diligence' been done on Cheltenham Motor Club, shown as 'dormant' at Companies House – and vital insurance cover?
- Would he like to be a young Pulverbatch family or elderly couple, trapped at home all day while 150 cars pass his front door at high speed?

#### Response from Councillor David Vasmer

I do acknowledge the strength of feeling expressed by a number of residents, businesses and parish councils, particularly in relation to the proposed Dorrington/Pulverbatch stage. All representations received by the Council, including those submitted by parish councils, residents, businesses and elected members, have been reviewed and considered as part of the assessment process and have informed both ongoing discussions with the organiser and the reports prepared which form part of the Cabinet discussion.

It may assist to clarify that Shropshire Council does not formally "approve" events in their entirety. The role of the Highway Authority is instead to consider the specific statutory and operational matters falling within its remit, 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. Please refer to my report for more detail on the following considerations:

- the consultation undertaken by the organiser and Motorsport UK;
- representations and objections received;
- route suitability and operational considerations;
- resident, business and agricultural access arrangements;
- environmental and community impacts;
- safety and emergency planning arrangements; and
- proposed mitigation measures.

Motorsport UK has issued a permit for the proposed event following completion of the required consultation and assessment processes. I have also reviewed information provided regarding governance and insurance arrangements associated with the organiser and the event. Public liability insurance arrangements are provided through the Motorsport UK framework and the event organisers have advised that cover includes indemnity up to £100m.

I am aware that a previous proposal involving this organizer did not progress within Herefordshire. My understanding is that the circumstances in Herefordshire involved unresolved operational and mitigation matters, and the organizer ultimately withdrew the event because the timeline became too compressed to successfully implement all the necessary arrangements. However, each proposed event must be considered strictly on its own merits, having regard to the specific routes, consultations, operational arrangements, mitigation measures, and representations unique to our local authority area.

Regarding the stages, it is estimated that the road closures during competitive stage operations will last approximately two-and-a-half hours in the morning and a further two-and-a-half hours in the afternoon. Organizers propose to facilitate managed vehicle access between competitive stage runs when it is required and operationally safe to do so.

Properties not situated directly on the closed route will maintain continuous highway access; however, localized spectator and event traffic may cause occasional congestion, which marshals and stewards will be deployed to help manage. I fully recognize these temporary restrictions will cause inconvenience and disruption for some residents, local businesses, and agricultural operators; these operational details remain a key focus of ongoing mitigation discussions with the organizers and those properties.

At the present time, I have not identified any fundamental technical or operational issue that cannot be resolved through mitigation, appropriate planning and management. However, this has reached Cabinet because the wider community, environmental and reputational considerations remain material matters for determination and which are outside the scope of my role.