

CABINET – 14 JULY 2026

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

1. Councillor Chris Naylor

I've great sympathy for the difficult situation of Cabinet/officers working incredibly hard to maintain an effective Council while turning finances round – caught between past 'catastrophic' budgeting, and current grant cuts, and costly bail-out loans tied up with asset-disposal strings.

So I'm pleased officers are offering a briefing for Finance and Improvement Scrutiny soon on the hundreds of property assets we own – including a couple of fields in one village near me – and on the disposal pipeline which officers are understandably working on, to help pay back these loans, with relevant criteria and governance process.

These criteria are at 4.4, but one point not on that list is complexity, and I would ask the Cabinet Member why?

We're talking today about Shirehall, and I'd hazard that its sale is one of the most complex of all the asset disposals which the Council could be looking at - the huge site, state of properties on it, options for its future use or indeed its part/full demolition – all likely dependent on technical issues, planning permissions, external funding.

So if the aim is to convince MHCLG of our commitment to asset disposal – when they look at our case this autumn – is this really the right place to start? What progress can we possibly show on Shirehall by then? Shouldn't we progress simpler lower-hanging fruit first?

I'm very keen indeed we get the Shirehall site back into use, but do we have to decide finally today - when other options haven't yet been fully pursued.

2. Councillor Dawn Husemann

Does the Cabinet accept that demolition for redevelopment would be contrary to government policy and the Councils 'net zero by 2030' target?

3. Councillor Bredan Mallon

Will a financial comparison be made between the 2-track approach recommended by T&F i.e. **either** pursuing a sale **or** securing a JV partner in order to enable members to make an informed decision, and will a financial appraisal be made to compare the receipt from an immediate sale with the cost of replacing the 'unfit for purpose' Guildhall by Joint Venture?