

PUBLIC QUESTIONS
COUNCIL 24 SEPTEMBER 2026

Question from Mike Streetly

Meole Brace Park and Ride

Between 2013 and 2022 the usage of the Meole Brace Park and Ride Scheme was regularly around a third of the total usage of Shrewsbury's Park and Ride sites. Shropshire Council has quoted the recent usage at Meole Brace of 135,000 (30% of the total for the three sites) as grounds for closure. Yet, pre-COVID the site was being used by almost twice as many people (260,000 average 2013-18). Could the council please provide the usage figures for the three sites for the period 2022 to date and outline what the council has done and spent to advertise these essential services over the last 5 years?

Question from Andrew Sceats

Closing Cornovii Developments Limited and Cornovii Investments (Shropshire) Limited at a minimum estimated ratepayers' loss of £4 million, follows major financial losses associated with the aborted North West Relief Road, the purchase of the Shrewsbury Shopping Centres and the abandoned Sundorne swimming pool project. These, together with the Shrewsbury railway station gyratory debacle and other numerous lesser capital projects have helped erode public confidence in the council and its councillors.

Most decisions were the responsibility of the previous Conservative administration, although some had support from other established political parties.

Unfortunately, many statements about Cornovii have been made by officers.

Examples of these being the comments made by the current interim s151 officer at two recent meetings;

- that Cornovii 'bought' Council- owned sites. In fact, some purchases were made with the issue of worthless Cornovii shares in real terms
- at its formation in 2019, following legal advice provided by a leading international law firm it would seem that the Council had disregarded some information provided. My assertion was not refuted as being incorrect, but its importance was minimised by the officer in question.

Will Council now instigate, without delay, a Public Enquiry into the 2 Cornovii companies rather than having one 'in house' at a later date when memories fade, and documents either become or unavailable or lost, with the aims of;

- learning fully What, When & Why things have happened and Who took responsibility
- improving matters in the future
- restoring public faith in the Council?

Question from Christopher James

I have asked a number of questions regarding the costs associated with the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road and the Shrewsbury Railway Station Gyratory. My most recent two questions, submitted in the first week of July, have yet to elicit a reply. However, based on other responses to date, there is strong evidence to support the view that neither the Council nor WSP are complying with the terms of their contract. The Council's latest response to my questions clearly indicates that there is an alarming lack of change control and, consequently, raises questions about the Council possibly overpaying for third party services. In view of the communication from Central Government expressing its concerns what measures has the Council taken to

- i) Undertake a review and compliance audit of the WSP contract(s)
- ii) Examine the possibility of recovering overpayments
- iii) Undertake a compliance audit of the the contract with Keir (who were also engaged on the NWRR)
- iv) Improve the Council's in house skills with regard to contract management and administration.

Question from Claire Rowbotham

Shropshire Council's Built Environment Consultancy Contract with WSP is worth up to £100m, and Cabinet confirmed in February that £24.4m was paid to WSP on the North West Relief Road alone. Please confirm the total paid to WSP UK Ltd and any associated group companies in each of the financial years 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26, and the sum committed, owed or forecast for 2026/27; and confirm the basis on which WSP is remunerated — chargeable hours against a schedule of rates, fixed-price task orders, or another mechanism. Despite these sums, developers creating homes and jobs in Shropshire report that they cannot deal directly with the WSP consultant working on their scheme. Every query is relayed through Council officers, adding a link to the chain that produces delays, repeat questions and avoidable confusion, and consuming scarce officer time. A different consultant is frequently assigned to each application even where several applications form parts of a single overall scheme, so knowledge of the site is lost and the same issues resurface. This is particularly acute for drainage, which is inherently site-wide rather than application-specific. What will the portfolio holder do to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these processes for all stakeholders?

Question from Ian White

On 22nd August, I was in the park in Shrewsbury and I happened upon a protest. Though not in the military myself, I come from a proud military family, so when I saw the union flags, it warmed my heart, and discovering that ending illegal immigration was the message, I was fully on board.

I will say, I was at first disappointed that our protest was significantly outnumbered by a counter protest. Why oppose such a good message?

However, the penny soon dropped...

The protesters weren't all necessarily opposing specifics of illegal immigration. Some of the protesters made comments which appeared to be outright xenophobic and racist, together with displaying other prejudices - homophobia, misogyny, and transphobia. In my opinion, it was horrible.

A couple of seemingly less offensive members of the protest explained why they were there. This is the reason for my question.

What are consequences for Cllrs who publicly voice opinions and prejudices which might encourage public displays of hate? And what would happen if people from minority groups are harmed as a result?