

MEMBER QUESTIONS
COUNCIL 24 SEPTEMBER 2026

Question from Councillor Kate Halliday

I have previously raised concerns regarding parking pressures in Belle Vue and Coleham, including the impact of increasing development, commuter parking and the loss of on-street parking spaces. Despite this, residents continue to contact me describing worsening difficulties in finding parking close to their homes, particularly in Old Coleham. Similar concerns are now being raised in relation to further potential developments on Old Coleham that will remove existing parking capacity whilst potentially adding additional demand.

In addition, since the Council increased parking charges in its off-street car parks, many residents have reported a noticeable increase in long-stay on-street parking in Belle Vue and Coleham, with people parking in residential streets and then walking into the town centre. This has led to vehicles parking on pavements and close to junctions, obstructing footways, reducing visibility for drivers and pedestrians, creating difficulties for people with prams and mobility scooters, restricting access to residents' driveways, and raising concerns about whether emergency and service vehicles can safely access some of our narrower streets.

For example, when traffic from Longden Road was recently diverted along South Hermitage, a road designed to accommodate two-way traffic, severe congestion occurred because parking on both sides of the road effectively reduced it to a single-lane route.

Given the ongoing nature of these concerns, when can Belle Vue be considered for a residents' parking permit scheme, and will the Council consider temporary parking restrictions on South Hermitage during future traffic diversions to prevent a recurrence of the severe congestion recently experienced?

Question from Councillor Andy Boddington

Forecasts from the World Meteorological Organisation indicate an “exceptionally high likelihood of nearly 100 per cent” that El Niño will persist through to February 2027, with climate impacts continuing well into 2027. The UK Met Office says 2027 is very likely to exceed 2024 as the warmest year on record and be another year to temporarily exceed +1.5C above the preindustrial period. The consequences are likely to include flooding as well as excess heat.

1) What capacity does Shropshire Council have to support residents during this event?

- 2) What preparations has it made, including liaising with the government?
- 3) What information will it be providing to residents?

Question from Councillor Duncan Kerr

On the 25th August Angela Rayner, Secretary of State and the Minister for Housing wrote to the Council leader saying the Government is “committed to delivering the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation”....and to “decisively raise our ambition to ensure we build council houses on a scale not seen for decades”.

The letter asks Council to “review their plans for increasing the supply of council homes; consider how council-owned land could be used for housebuilding and tell the government what barriers are preventing you from building ambitiously and quickly”. It states they “expect every Council to scale up now”.

Having approved a 30 year HRA business plan which shows over £110m in balances at the end of the period we seem to have the financial headroom to respond positively. However our barrier is the availability of suitable land in the right location, at an affordable price with planning permission likely.

Although clearly relevant to both the call-in on the decision to make surplus to requirements the land owned by the Council at the Oswestry SUE, and the Cabinet’s recent decision to wind-down Cornovii Ltd, this letter was not included or referred to in those papers.

In the light of this can you please publish your response to the Minister’s letter so the public can be re-assured that your warm words of support for Council housing building are matched by your actions in resisting pressure from MCHLG to sell our only suitable sites.

Question from Councillor Dawn Husemann

Given the stated aims of the council to harness the ‘benefits’ of AI as part of its digital strategy to improve service efficiency and reduce costs, what specific safeguards are currently in place or will be put in place to protect the integrity of council functions and ultimately the safety of our residents, service users and staff?

This is particularly important given the context of current widely reported concerns about the potential harms arising from AI. Our first duty is to safeguard and protect our residents, service users and staff and significant risks may arise through the increased adoption of AI to deliver council services. The legislative framework to control this technology is almost non-existent. The 'law of unintended consequences' is likely to apply massively to future development of AI and whilst that makes designing appropriate protections difficult, it is critical to the future security of our people. Will the administration explain how our stakeholders will be protected?"

Question from Councillor Brendan Mallon

In July 2025 this Council approved £1.3 million of additional borrowing for the Ludlow pyrolysis project. Members were told this covered legacy, “unforeseen” biodigester tank remediation issues adding £400,000 plus other increased costs, despite a March 2013 report identifying digestate removal requirements, then estimated at £100,000. The appendix to the 2025 report set out eight cost lines with no individual amounts, just a single total of £848,000. The Council has since confirmed in writing that remediation has now cost £652,100 (up 63%), that this was the principal reason additional funding was sought and not part of the original tender but added to the existing contract with BioDynamic Carbon, in which this Council has a 50% shareholding. BioDynamic Carbon and associated companies don't carry a registered activity for demolition, site preparation, remediation, or the collection or treatment of hazardous waste or a published record of such work.

Will the portfolio holder:

- (a) reconcile the £100,000, £400,000 and latest £652,100 figures and explain why this cost was deemed unforeseen
- (b) publish the individual figures behind the eight aggregated cost lines totalling £848,000
- (c) state which provision of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 was relied on to add £652,100 of demolition and hazardous waste works to that contract without a separate tender, and the date the written procurement and external legal advice referred to in the Council's own disclosure was given
- (d) identify which contractor physically carried out those works, the sum paid to that contractor, and the sum retained by BioDynamic Carbon?

Question from Councillor Susan Coleman

In the CIPFA report executive summary, key risk 8 says whilst the council should focus on those areas where the greatest savings can be made it cannot afford to ignore any other potential opportunities such as stopping those activities it is not obliged to deliver This has a rag rating of 9 red

Please can the portfolio holder tell Members which discretionary/ non statutory services it will be stopping in 2027/28 and what savings this will deliver