

**CABINET**  
**20 MARCH 2019**  
**MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

**Question 1 - Councillor David Vasmer**

Adopted by Shropshire Council, the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan aims to reduce traffic through the town. Reopening the path between Abbey Foregate and Platform 3 of the station (the old Gay Meadow footpath) is one policy the Plan backs to achieve this. Past attempts have failed because this can only be achieved by co-operation between Network Rail, Transport for Wales, Shrewsbury Town Council and Severnside Housing (who now manage the Old Meadow Housing Development).

Now that a new train operator has taken over the rail franchise and a new Department for Transport Community Rail Development Strategy (launched, November 2018) places a new emphasis on station accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, all parties have indicated that they are ready to discuss opening the path from Abbey Foregate to Platform 3. As the planning and transport authority, Shropshire Council should be the convenor of the meeting and be prepared to lead the initiative. Could the lead member for Transport and Highways ensure that a meeting is convened as soon as possible and that appropriate Local Members are involved in all these discussions.

**Response**

*Shropshire Council fully recognises the importance of the Old Gay Meadow access to the railway station, and has to date worked both with local supporters of the scheme and also the previous franchise holder (ATW) and Network Rail. It has also previously funded a study into the options available, although this was prior to the build out of the new housing adjacent to the proposed footway.*

*In advance of the new Transport for Wales (TfW) operator franchise, Shropshire Council has also raised this as a key priority issue for consideration during the new franchise period as part of the consultation over the franchise specification with Welsh Government colleagues.*

*The additional access point would contribute considerably to the aspirations of both the SITP (reduced unnecessary traffic circulation around the town), and the Big Town Plan by offering a viable parking alternative for rail users at the Abbey Foregate Car Park, and as such remains a key aspiration for SC, STC and the BiD.*

*The current Future High Street Fund (FHSF) bid for Shrewsbury will highlight this as a potential capital investment opportunity, the results of the current Future High Street Fund EOI process being announced in due course. If the FHSF bid receives a positive announcement, and this proceeds to a full capital bid, this will then allow the Council to pursue the ambition more actively with the required third party engagement.*

*It is key to recognise that delivery of this access at this time is primarily one for third party bodies (in terms of land ownership, capital investment, ongoing maintenance liabilities of any new access etc.), these being Network Rail, TfW and the private land interests around the Old Gay Meadow housing development. Shropshire Council will however continue to lobby and offer strong support for this proposal within the current limits of its influence. To that end, we are more than happy to convene a meeting locally on the matter and officers will look to raise this with the partners required, and local Members as soon as possible.*

## **Question 2 – Councillor Roger Evans**

How or will SC be effected by Fridays news regarding Interserve please.

Is there any information or help that SC can give to any Shropshire Businesses that will be effected by this news.

Further will the cabinet be reviewing how future work is carried out and start to use internal resources in manging this work rather than continuing to outsource it to companies who are controlled by foreign investors.

## **Response**

*Shropshire Council has no business arrangements with Interserve in this or recent previous years. Hence there appears to be no direct consequential issues for the Council. Obviously, there may be local supply chain issues and residents of the county whom may be personally affected, of which at present we have no direct information.*

## **Question 3 – Councillor Kevin Turley**

I have been sent some information on possible works at Chelmaren to convert offices or demolish and rebuild to make some transitional units for our LAC starting out in their own. This would still keep the support framework still in place if they need to come back for help.

My question from this our build figures quoted for this are as follows the figure £2,307 is a price for square metre with a updated costs from 1st quarter 2017 to 1st

quarter 2019 adding a further 15% to our metre square costs. The rebuild would come in at Just over £800,000 with other items, contingencies, fees etc. Based on this do we as a council with our current cost cutting and savings feel our money is being spent prudently as I have gained other indicative costing of builds from £1,600 to £1,900? Also can purchase four new builds at retail for £700,000 at retail. Could our current tender lists be looked at in this time of financial constraints?

## **Response**

*Figures were provided utilising industry standard guidelines, comparative costs and best practice for construction projects. Market increase in costs are an estimate based upon raw material costs with the impact of Brexit.*

*We are in the process of updating the framework for our building category with the introduction of the use of a dynamic purchasing system. This potential project has not been tendered and can at any stage be value engineered, however a clear scope of works and design criteria are crucial for PSG to provide a more robust pricing structure.*