

## **Place Overview Committee**

**03 September 2020**

### **Public Questions and Responses**

**From: Peter Clare, Member Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council**

Why does Shropshire Council continue to allow significant development adjacent to inadequate poorly maintained and often dangerous single track lanes, as in Hengoed, where the establishment of a large agricultural has resulted in a "rat-run" for large agricultural vehicles and even "H G V's" along a "pony and trap" lane involving two farms operating in tandem and under the same ownership/control?

**Response:**

Not all development requires planning permission, some including some agricultural development is permitted under the General Permitted Development Order. Where a planning application is required this is then assessed for compliance having regard to local and national policy before a decision is reached. The process is informed by technical consultees such as Highways Development Control officers who will assess the highway and traffic impacts before making a recommendation to the planning officer which will often include conditions necessary to make the development acceptable. This may require improvements to the access to a site, routing for traffic or offsite improvements such as passing places where this is considered necessary.

**From: Martin Latham, Hengoed Lanes Group**

In the last 12 months, the lanes of Hengoed have been subject to a huge increase in the volume and weight of traffic, due to the granting of planning permission to build an industrial dairy farm at Pentre Kendrick (accessed by a winding single track lane) and the granting of planning permission to build an agricultural contractors depot at Crown House, Selattyn, which has resulted in 20-30 heavy tractors, including all kinds of heavy agricultural machinery, being transported, often at speed, along inadequate roads.

It cannot be the responsibility of Central Government to pay for the repairs to the damage caused on these lanes. That would be a sticking plaster operation. The problem would still exist! Either the perpetrators of the damage pay for the repairs or the weight and speed limits be reduced to protect these essential local transport links.

**Response:**

The council recognises the impacts that large agricultural equipment has on rural roads and the paper on the agenda of today's meeting will begin to explore how the impacts of these can be better managed in the future.

**From: Ms Janet Cobb, Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project**

The cost to the highways department and by default to the citizens of Shropshire of road repairs is outstripping funding available and potholes and flooding causing road damage have rapidly become headline news as well as posing a serious safety issue.

Would Shropshire Council consider splitting the Highways contract and bringing the Highways contract for country lanes back 'in house' to be managed locally?

This would mean that verges, ditches and hedgerows could be seen as a continuous corridor for wildlife all across Shropshire with contracts reflecting restoration and low maintenance and local ownership, management and accountability.

This could save the council substantial sums of money in the longer term by tapping into the wealth of volunteer time and expertise available in numerous villages especially in South Shropshire and collaborating with the many organisations currently already working on the ground to improve the environment such as The National Trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Shropshire Hills AONB, Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project etc.

If this proposal is accepted in principal then a move to building and capitalizing on the existing community wealth that abounds in Shropshire could be taken forward collaboratively with Shropshire Council and further positive spin offs could be brought to the table engaging with tourism, farming and local food production and hospitality ventures?

**Response:**

The poor state of roads and the resultant potholes and flooding, particularly in rural areas, is a national problem which has been recognised by government and resulted in a significant increase in funding being made available to authorities this year. Shropshire has invested these additional funds in a comprehensive programme of resurfacing which will help protect 275km of rural carriageway (the equivalent of resurfacing carriageway from Shrewsbury to Dover) from further deterioration.

The Council are keen to ensure that we drive value from the budgets that we have available and therefore are open to exploring opportunities for alternate delivery within current contractual and financial constraints.