

COUNCIL 23 SEPTEMBER 2021 MEMBER QUESTIONS

Question from Councillor Pam Moseley

Following receipt of a public petition regarding the statue of Clive of India in Shrewsbury's Town Square in July 2020, Shropshire Council recognised, inter alia, that Clive of India was now recognised as a corrupt mercenary, that a better explanation of Clive's history was required, and whilst it was not possible to rewrite history, it was important to be able to understand it.

It is now acknowledged that Clive caused great harm, and the deaths through war and famine, of over a million of the indigenous population of India. It is felt that a more accurate interpretation of his actions and the regime which he served is required, so that his life and his representation in the Square may be put into perspective by current and future generations.

The then portfolio holder for assets, growth and regeneration acknowledged that the colonial past of Britain is not something that should always be honoured, but used to inform the future, and to action this in the instance of Clive's statue in Shrewsbury. Hence, Museum staff were to be requested to provide a better interpretation of the statue for approval and locate this appropriately.

It is now over a year since this pledge, and no action has taken place with regard to the statue. Elsewhere, other Councils have faced the same or similar situations with statuary erected many years ago when cultural sensitivities were very different to those of today, but have made some efforts to ameliorate the situation; in Edinburgh for example, a statue of Henry Dundas, Lord Melville, who took action to delay the abolition of the slave trade, is now accompanied by a sign which explains that a new plaque for the statue has been commissioned to detail the impact of his actions, and gives the wording which will be on the new plaque.

Can the portfolio holder explain why there has been no progress yet on the reinterpretation of the Clive statue, and also, when this will take place?

Response from Councillor Cecilia Motley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place, Tourism & Transport

- Cabinet decided in July 2020 to keep the statue in situ with interpretation.

- Shropshire Museums Service then sought and secured funding for the works, drafted interpretation material and consulted relevant stakeholders.
- Final sign-off on the wording and agreement of a stone inset and upright interpretation panel was provided via Cecilia Motley in July 2021.
- To mitigate delays, the Museum Service erected a temporary interpretation panel at the entrance to the museum. During periods in which lockdown forced museum closure staff worked to re-interpret items on display relating to British colonialism and updated in excess of 200 catalogue entries.
- Since sign-off was received we have identified suitable contractors and secured quotes for the stone masonry and have arranged to meet City ID who have been appointed to deliver wayfinding and heritage interpretation across the town.
- Date of installation is subject to the outcome of this meeting and production and installation timeframes however we are pushing for completion of the project this autumn.

Question from Councillor Roy Aldcroft

In April next year it is expected that works will start to assist the flow of a large amount of HS2 traffic through the village of Woore, Pipegate and Irelands Cross in order to move large quantities of building materials and spoil to the working site via the A51 and A525 at Bar Hill. This process will take up to seven years and will severely impact the roadways and Woore village.

On behalf of the residents and businesses in Woore parish may I ask what reassurances Shropshire Council has negotiated with HS2, regarding the list of traffic mitigations to be completed prior to these convoys starting.

In particular, the speed limit reduction throughout the whole parish to 30mph, which will enable the provision of pedestrian crossing points at key points between Pipegate and Woore?

Significant changes are to be made in the centre of Woore regarding parking, retail activity and school drop off points, has the impact of such measures on businesses been taken into account?

Will Shropshire Council continue working with Owen Paterson, local parish leadership and HS2 to ensure the parish gets the best deal possible negotiations and supervision of this huge undertaking in order to reduce the detrimental effect HS2 activities along the route may have on the parish.

Response from Cllr Steve Charmley – Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, Highways and Built Housing

Shropshire Council has been working and will continue to work with Woore Parish and Owen Patterson MP on this issue. As Cllr Aldcroft is aware there have been numerous meetings and discussions to negotiate appropriate mitigations desired by the parish council and paid for by HS2. It is recognised that there will be an impact on the village of Woore and Shropshire Council with Woore Parish and Owen Patterson MP met with the Minister for HS2 to state the case and secure mitigations. In this respect 31 mitigations were identified with 21 now fully agreed or agreed in principle.

For the outstanding measures road safety audits have been commissioned and reports shared that have identified other improvements. The Council has written to HS2 and been in discussions to obtain a definite list of all measures and the necessary programme of works and will feed this back to the stakeholders.

The process for the statutory consultation process for a 30-mph zone for the village has begun and will be completed in the new year.

There has never been any doubt of working with the Parish and Owen Patterson to secure the best package of mitigations possible, however, this is a negotiation, and it can't be guaranteed that all requirements will be achieved. I do assure you though that staff are making their best efforts to achieve the best deal possible in partnership and collaboration with all concerned.

Question from Councillor Viv Parry

Please could this Council say how much is fly tipping costing this Council, has this gone up with Covid, what is to be done about it and what are we doing about household waste that is paid for to be removed and then is not collected but left outside the house of the person who has paid for it to be removed for over a week

Response from Cllr Steve Charmley – Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, Highways and Built Housing

The council's costs for dealing with fly tipped waste are

2019/20 = £96,930.76 (total collection and disposal cost)

2020/21 = £138,311.11 (total collection and disposal cost)

2020/21 showing an increase in cost of approx. 42% compared to 2019/20 which follows a national trend of increased fly tipping during the lockdown period. With covid restrictions having been lifted in July 2021 and more people returning to their pre-lock down activities we are anticipating a decrease in this trend.

With regards to waste that is paid for to be removed and then is not collected but left outside for over a week the Veolia Contract the council provides a Bulky Waste Service, which arranges to remove certain goods and appliances by appointment. Bulky waste collections are arranged for a specific day and residents asked not to present the waste until the day of collection. If the collection does not take place on the appointed day residents should contact the Council and a revised collection date will be agreed. The team have had no reports of this happening recently though. If Cllr Parry would like to forward any specific details to me, I will ask for them to be investigated.

Question received from Councillor Nigel Hartin

As a recent convert to Electric vehicles, I have noted the lack of availability of EV charging points in Shropshire Council car parks across the County & in particular in Shrewsbury., indeed I appear to be better served for EV charging points in Clun courtesy of the two charging points provided at Clun Fire Station than do the residents of Shrewsbury.

Other nearby Local Authorities, such as Herefordshire Council have a number of EV charging points in their Council car parks, (eg: Garrick multi-storey, Venns Lane & Shirehall) in contrast to Shropshire Council where there are no charging points in any of the Council Car parks in the river loop (eg: Frankwell, Julian's Friars, Bridge Street, Ravens Meadow etc) nor are there any EV charging points at the Councils Park & Ride car parks. In terms of the nearest EV charging point to the River Loop, the nearest EV charging point is again provided by the Fire Authority at its St Michaels St Headquarters.

Given the push by Central Government in providing funds to assist local authorities to provide EV charging points ahead of the ban on the purchase of new Petrol & Diesel private vehicles in 2030, why is Shropshire Council so slow at doing this when other Local authorities are well ahead of us in this regard?

Response from Cllr Steve Charmley – Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, Highways and Built Housing

Shropshire Council are currently in the process of finalising the design to install 50 Electric Vehicle Charging Points across the County through grant

project funding primarily to assist residential areas that have limited off-street parking. These sites will also be available to non-residents with the majority located in car parks for ease of 24-hour access located in the following towns. I am happy to forward the location of these sites if desired.

The team have also initiated the development of a strategy to ensure that further charge points are provided where most needed.

Question received from Councillor Alex Wagner

Shrewsbury has been subject to a period of, according to the Council itself, 'unprecedented' development. Thousands of houses have been built in Shrewsbury, and in the Council's plan, thousands more are scheduled to be built over the next decade. Despite this, in recent years, Shrewsbury has actually seen a reduction in the number of secondary schools, most recently closing the Wakeman School and amalgamating Harlescott & Sundorne. In practical terms, this has marked a notable reduction in school choice for parents.

In previous answers to questions on school place needs, the Council have cited now-delayed projects to expand Meole, and the availability of spaces at the Academy, the latter of which is not on the right side of town for most parents. This, in the eyes of many residents, does not provide a real long-term solution to issues with school place choice, especially in light of the aforementioned development. Could I ask whether the portfolio holder agrees with prior statements that there is 'no need' for a new secondary school in Shrewsbury, and whether there is any willingness at all to try and bring plans forward this side of 2030?

Response from Councillor Kirstie Hurst Knight, Portfolio Holder for Children & Education

The impact on school places from housing development in Shrewsbury in recent years is evidenced by the required expansion of school places at Mereside CE Primary School and Meole Brace CE Primary, the additional forms of entry being added to Harlescott Junior School and Sundorne Infant School in 2021/22, the addition of a new teaching block at Meole Brace School this autumn, and the building of a new primary school in Bowbrook in 2022/23.

Although parents have the right to name a school as their preference, it is important to note that they do not have the right to a school place of their choice. School place planning is not founded on the popularity of a school or its parental preference rate but on the firmer foundation of pupils

resident, and forecast to be resident, in the school's catchment area, noting that Shrewsbury has a single secondary school catchment area.

Analysis of data from the last decade shows that the supply of secondary school places in the Shrewsbury area has exceeded in-area demand each year. Officers continue to closely monitor forecasts to ensure this record is maintained. It is worth noting that they have access to a significant number of years data on in-area primary-aged pupils to plan for secondary school places in the town.

The number of Year 7 secondary school places available in Shrewsbury in 2011/12, the final year Wakeman School was open, was 945. In that year there were 721 in-area Year 7 pupils in Shrewsbury, meaning there were 224 surplus places, 23.7% of the total Year 7 capacity. The year after Wakeman School closed, the number of Year 7 places in Shrewsbury reduced to 810, with in-area Year 7 pupils numbering 692, meaning there were 118 surplus places, 14.6% of the total Year 7 capacity. This demonstrates that there were sufficient secondary school places to meet demand from in-area pupils after the closure of Wakeman School.

When Grange School and Sundorne School came together to form the Shrewsbury Academy there was no reduction in the number of Year 7 places available – the previous school admission numbers of 125 and 112 respectively were combined into an admission number for the academy of 237. The Priory School also increased their capacity per year group to 168, taking the Shrewsbury Year 7 places up to 816.

While the new teaching block project at Meole Brace School has experienced some slippage, temporary provision has been secured to ensure that the additional secondary school places can be accommodated from September 2021. The number of Year 7 places in Shrewsbury has been increased to 843 from September 2021 as a consequence of the new build. The in-area Year 7 pupil number in September is 783, meaning there are currently 60 surplus places, 7.1% of total Year 7 capacity in the town.

Further expansion in secondary school places in Shrewsbury will be dependent on a wide range of factors, not least the formal adoption of the Local Plan in July 2022 and the allocation of housing in the town in the next Plan Period. Based on this, officers will carry out a thorough review of school places across the whole county using the housing allocations for the Plan Period to identify where additional school places will be required, which will inform the development of options to deliver the required additional capacity. These options will be developed in consultation with senior school leaders in the schools impacted by a forecast growth in pupil numbers, as well as local members. This review will be programmed to

take place in the 2022/23 academic year, however current evidence suggests that further expansion will not be required in the immediate future.

In relation to secondary provision in Shrewsbury, a preferred option in addressing any forecast requirement for additional secondary school places is likely to initially focus on further expansion(s) of existing secondary schools, given the likely numbers of additional places required. This makes greater financial and economic sense and would not have a negative impact on existing schools, by drawing pupils away into a new school, potentially compromising their financial and educational viability and creating expensive unfilled school spaces in the short to medium term. The review outlined above will inform the development of these options.