



<u>Committee and Date</u> Shifnal and Sheriffhales Local Joint Committee 4 March 2014 7.00 pm

<u>Item No</u> 2 Public

**NOTES THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 16 JULY 2013 AT SHIFNAL
VILLAGE HALL**
(7.00 – 9.15 p.m.)

Responsible Officer Anne Cousins

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Committee Members Present:

Shropshire Council:

Kevin Turley
Stuart West

Shifnal Town Council

John Horne
Gordon Tonkinson

Sheriffhales Parish Council

Janet Jones
Peter Young

Shropshire Council officers:

Anne Cousins Committee Officer
Helen Howie Principal Policy Officer Housing
Andrea McWilliams Community Action Officer

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

Adam Matthews Assistant Commander

West Mercia Police

PC Nick Allbutt

There were approximately 150 members of the public at the meeting.

ACTION**1. Election of Chairman**

- 1.1 It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Mr Stuart West be elected Chairman for the forthcoming municipal year.

2. Apologies and Substitutions

- 2.1 There were no apologies.

3. Appointment of Vice Chairman

- 3.1 It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Mr Kevin Turley be appointed Vice Chairman for the forthcoming municipal year.

4. Chairman's Introduction

- 4.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and said he was delighted such a large number of people had come along.

5. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- 5.1 None were disclosed.

6. Notes

- 6.1 **RESOLVED:** That the notes of the meeting of Shifnal and Sheriffhales Local Joint Committee held on 6 November 2012 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

7. Local Policing Update

- 7.1 PC Nick Allbutt was pleased to note the Shifnal Carnival had passed off without incident. He then provided the following crime figures:

Anti-Social Behaviour: 105

Public Order: 18

Vehicle Nuisance: 12

Assaults: 35 (11 detected)

Criminal Attempts (breaking and entering damage): 31 (1 detected)

Burglaries: 102 (3 detected)

Criminal Damage: 33

Making off without payment (petrol): 58

Robberies: 2

Theft: 114 (2 detected)

Vehicle Crime: 41 (1 detected)

- 7.2 The burglaries reported were mostly shed break-ins, particularly in the rural areas, and one arrest had been made the previous week. PC Allbutt affirmed it was a low crime area, with good detection rates.

8. Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

- 8.1 Assistant Commander Adam Matthews addressed the meeting, explaining the financial situation facing Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. Another £5 million savings had to be found between now and 2020, out of a total budget of £20 million. Approximately £3.2 million savings had been identified without affecting frontline services but this still left a shortfall. All staff had been asked to contribute ideas and these were being currently being assessed. The viable suggestions would be presented to the Fire Authority in September and then a formal consultation process would begin.
- 8.2 There was discussion about the sparsity factor in Shropshire. The Assistant Commander confirmed Shropshire was the largest inland county and there was a 15-minute target for fire engines. Some felt this was far too late, but the Assistant Commander explained this was a realistic target and the majority would arrive in 8/9 minutes. He informed the public there were 5 fully staffed fire engines in Shropshire which were used around the clock, plus 23 retained firefighters.
- 8.3 In response to a question, it was confirmed the Chairman of the Fire Authority and local MPs were doing their utmost, but the Authority was still facing the most severe cuts in the country.
- 8.4 The Chairman (also the Chairman of the Fire Authority) explained all the local MPs supported the Fire Authority and everyone was continuing to argue the case. He went on to report that another recent development for the Fire Authority was the creation of a trading arm on commercial fire safety, which was going live on 1 August 2013. Although this would generate income to help the Fire Authority, the Chairman said it would not be enough and therefore lobbying the government would continue.
- 8.5 A Member asked what had been done about Chinese lanterns. The Chairman referred to the recent huge fire at Smethwick caused by a Chinese lantern and anticipated action would be taken now. He had been trying to do something for the past two or three years without success.
- 8.6 A member of the public had a specific query about access in one location and the Assistant Commander requested details be given to him after the meeting.
- 8.7 A member of the public said public opinion resulted in action and urged everyone present to write to their MP on the Fire Service cuts.

ACTION**9. Update on Local Planning Issues**

- 9.1 Helen Howie, Principal Policy Officer Housing, Shropshire Council, gave a presentation on the local plan. She explained this plan showed revised preferred options for the area and the public had until 23 August 2013 to make comments.
- 9.2 The main points in the consultation were:
- Rural Areas – no community hubs or clusters had been identified, therefore all the area around Shifnal would be treated as ‘countryside’. This did not mean there would be no development, but new build market housing and large-scale development would not be acceptable.
 - 2 new housing sites had been identified – Coppice Green Lane (195 homes) and The Uplands (160 homes).
 - Lamledge Lane was protected as employment land, plus 3 hectares at Aston Road and 2 hectares at the J.N. Bentley premises.
 - The consultation was seeking views on safeguarded land (i.e. land reserved for future development) and on the development boundary.
- 9.3 Helen Howie then referred to the Lodge Hill proposal. A developer had come forward with a proposal, including a supermarket, for this green belt site. Helen Howie emphasised this was not a Shropshire Council proposal and that no changes were planned for the green belt before 2026.
- Helen Howie explained that, under the National Planning Policy Framework, there must be a five-year supply of housing land, otherwise there was a presumption in favour of development. She added an out of-town supermarket would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 9.4 Key issues to be considered were:
- Are some sites better than others?
 - Employment for the town
 - Long-term Green Belt boundary
 - Drainage
 - Schools
 - Medical
 - Traffic.
- 9.5 Helen Howie commented that traffic and car parking issues were closely linked to town centre development and the plan was an opportunity for Shifnal to address some long-standing issues. She noted developers were also investors and therefore there was the possibility of leverage to make improvements to the town.

ACTION**All**

- 9.7 In conclusion, Helen Howie stated the deadline for responding to the consultation was 23 August. The Chairman added there was another meeting on Friday evening (19 July) and he encouraged people to attend and also to respond to the consultation.
- 9.8 In the ensuing debate, several speakers raised concerns about the effects of 1600 more homes in Shifnal. Residents suggested Shifnal was taking a much greater proportion of development than other settlements. Concerns were also raised about the effects on infrastructure, e.g. traffic, medical practice, schools and some felt all these issues should be resolved before any building commenced.
- 9.9 In response to the concerns about the proportion of new homes being proposed in Shifnal, Helen Howie clarified the consultation was about two additional sites and she emphasised no decisions had yet been taken. She also commented that it was easier to resolve infrastructure issues at the time of a planning application, when conditions could be attached.
- 9.10 There were a number of concerns raised about traffic if the additional homes were built, in particular in Coppice Green Lane, Shifnal Road, Curriers Lane, and Innage Lane.
- 9.11 A resident suggested the question about the Idsall School boundary in the questionnaire was very ambiguous and asked what “safeguarded land” meant. Helen Howie explained safeguarded land meant land identified for future development needs. She advised anyone completing the questionnaire to add their comments in the comments box.
- 9.12 Some residents were concerned that the council would ignore “emotional” statements and only take into account facts and figures. Helen Howie explained the concept of “material considerations” on which planning decisions were based. She added if residents felt strongly, they should add their comments in the comments box when completing the questionnaire.
- 9.13 In response to a question about the Houghton Road development, which had received outline planning permission, Helen Howie explained this had occurred because at the time Shropshire Council did not have a 5-year supply of housing land. Since 26 June 2013, the position had changed and the Council did now have a 5-year supply of housing land.
- 9.14 It was clarified that the formal way to lodge objections to the Lodge Hill proposal was to complete the questionnaire, adding comments in the comments box. Helen Howie confirmed Shropshire Council’s position, which was that the proposal was on green belt land and therefore could not happen at this time. She further explained that Shropshire Council decided on green belt boundaries and any changes needed to have a long lead-in time.

ACTION

- 9.15 Another concern was whether or not Shropshire Council consulted its neighbours, e.g. Telford, over planning matters. In response, Helen Howie confirmed Shropshire Council did indeed work with neighbouring authorities.
- 9.16 A question was raised about the railway arch access issue at Aston Road. It was confirmed this had not yet been resolved. The view of Shropshire Council was that a pedestrian link was needed, but this would be a matter for the site promoter to resolve.
- 9.17 There was criticism about lack of publicity for this meeting, which many residents had only found out about that day. On such an important issue, residents expected posters to be displayed around the town and for leaflets to be delivered. Sheriffhales Parish Council was praised for the way in which it had consulted with local residents, but in contrast, Shifnal Town Council and Shropshire Council had not done enough. Residents felt a communications plan for Shifnal needed to be put in place.
- 9.18 Concern was also raised about the tight deadline of 23 August for public responses to the consultation and a request was made to extend this. Some Members supported this view.

All

- 9.19 The Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions and encouraged residents to attend the meeting on Friday evening.

10. 2013/14 Finance Report, including Update on Funding Requests for Consideration

- 10.1 The Community Action Officer presented her report and provided a brief update on each application.

- 10.2 **RESOLVED:** That the following applications be approved:

Shifnal Theatrical and Repertory Society (STARS)	
(to increase publicity)	£1000.00
Shifnal Millennium Sensory Garden (remove chippings)	£602.00
Sheriffhales Parish Council (improve bench)	£500.00
Sheriffhales Village Hall Committee (security alarm)	£350.00
Shifnal 1 st Scout Group (camping equipment)	£560.00
Shifnal Cricket Club (security fencing for oil storage)	£250.00
Shifnal Swimming Pool Committee (banner)	£200.00

CAO

Total amount awarded: £3462.00

10.3	There were two applications from Shifnal (St Andrews) Youth Club, one for £1000 towards a new boiler and another for £600 for replacement curtains. Both were deferred and it was	ACTION
	RESOLVED: That as long as it can be established that the future of the building is secure for the next 5 years, the grants will be awarded as requested, if this is not the case the matter will need to be considered further by the committee members.	CAO
10.4	The Community Action Officer confirmed the deadline for grant applications for the next meeting will be mid-January 2014.	
11.	Public Question Time/Future Agenda Items	
11.1	A member of the public referred to a recent press article in which it was reported responsibility for taking decisions had been delegated to individual Shropshire Council Cabinet Members. This meant one Member would be deciding on the future of adult day centres soon and he felt this was undemocratic. The Chairman explained this was to speed up decisions and would not cut out democracy.	
11.2	A member of the public raised concerns about the disgraceful state of the public toilets in Shifnal. Mr Tonkinson, of Shifnal Town Council, agreed the toilets were in a poor state and that at least £74,000 had been spent on them. The Chairman agreed to raise this matter with the relevant officer at Shropshire Council.	Chairman
11.3	Another issue raised was the level of water in Silvermere. The Chairman said there had been a collapse in the outlet and any developer would have to invest money to rectify this.	
11.4	Another concern was the issue of travellers and the costs of clearing- up after them. A resident described how he had contacted Shropshire Council and had been informed that any rubbish left behind by travellers was treated as fly-tipping and cleared away without charge to the travellers. The resident commented that travellers did not pay council tax and did not pay to have their rubbish removed. In contrast, he paid council tax and would be charged an additional amount if he had extra rubbish. He had written on this subject to the Leader of the Council but had not received a reply. The Chairman undertook to raise the matter directly with the Leader.	Chairman
11.5	It was noted the next LJC meeting was not until February 2014. In view of the importance of the topics under discussion this evening, it was suggested an earlier meeting date was required. The Chairman explained any additional meetings would have to be held without officer support, but agreed one could be arranged, perhaps in October.	

		ACTION
11.6	It was agreed the February meeting should be held in Shifnal, not Sheriffhales. It was preferable to hold meetings in Sheriffhales only in the summer months.	Committee Officer
11.7	Suggested future agenda items were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future of Shifnal• Community Infrastructure Levy and how it operates• Public transport• Traffic	
12.	Date of Next Meeting	
12.1	The next scheduled meeting was Tuesday 25 February 2014, but see paragraph 11.5 above about a possible additional meeting.	Committee Officer

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....