



Date: Thursday, 17 July 2014
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND
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COUNCIL

TO FOLLOW REPORT (S)

5 Public Questions (Pages 1 - 2)

To receive any questions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14.

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PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

AGENDA ITEM 5

QUESTION 1

MRS JOYCE BRAND will ask the following question:

Please will Mr. Barrow state clearly:

- a) How much money was allocated by central government to Shropshire to alleviate hardship in the county?
- b) How much of this allocation has actually been spent?
- c) Was the website paid for out of this fund dedicated solely to helping people access the fund and how much did the website cost?
- d) Mr. Barrow has stated publicly that the remaining money (more than £400,000) has been put into 'reserves'. Is the £400,000 being held in the reserve accounts of the private company IP&E? Is the money being held earning interest?

MR K BARROW will reply as follows:

- a) We received £467,990 in 2013/2014 and £467,990 in 2014/2015. This funding has now been cut and we will receive no further money to provide support.
- b) Approximately £74,000. The remaining money will be used to provide crisis support for as long as the fund lasts.
- c) The website is part of a proposal from our Welfare Reform Strategy Board for providing support solutions after all the money has been spent. This board is hosted by Bromford and attended by the council support team, STAR, Sanctuary Housing, Severnside Housing, Shropshire Housing Group, Wrekin Housing Trust, CAB, A4U, Age UK, Housing Options, Customer Services, Job Centre Plus, and DWP. This is only in a planning stage and is being discussed with stakeholders if it is feasible, needed or wanted. No money has been spent on a website to date.
- d) No this money is not in IP&E, but is held in the councils reserves.

QUESTION 2

MS FAITH LOGAN will ask the following question:

It seems from information coming from Shropshire CCG & Shropshire NHS Community Trust that there is likely to be the loss of one Accident & Emergency Department in the old Shropshire County area (i.e. Shropshire & Telford & Wrekin). What is Shropshire Council doing to represent the interests of Shropshire residents who face the loss of this facility in Shrewsbury?

MRS K CALDER Portfolio Holder for Health, will reply as follows:

The review of the County of Shropshire's Accident and Emergency (A/E) facilities is part of a review known as Future Fit. It is a Clinician led review, which the two Clinical Commissioning Groups that serve the county are conducting.

Shropshire Council Elected Members and officers are actively engaged in the Future Fit review and its working groups that are assessing the future need for services, including A/E services, Minor Injuries Units and Walk In Centres.

Regular Reports regarding Future Fit are provided to the Shropshire Health and Wellbeing Board which has representation from Elected Members and Council Officers as well as senior staff from Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group. In addition updates are provided to Shropshire Council's Health Oversight and Scrutiny Committee whose members are Shropshire Councillors. Through each of these routes the needs and interests of Shropshire residents are being represented. Factors such as the rurality of the county, the age profile of the population; the current patterns of usage of the current A/E facilities and travel times are being considered alongside the clinical best practice evidence base.

No decision has been made regarding a closure of either A/E department within the County.

QUESTION 3

MR CHRIS HESKETH will ask the following question:

My question relates to research that the council has undertaken into CBM and shale gas prospects. My request of the Council is that they ask applicants for unconventional test drilling to also provide an outline indication that the geology of the chosen area would be suitable for a future extraction well. An application for test drilling has inevitable impacts on the local community and there is a lot of Government research available into which areas are geologically suitable, or not.

MR M PRICE Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning, Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central) will reply as follows:

The Local Planning Authority will seek information relevant and necessary to determine any particular planning application in accordance with National and Local Planning Policy.

You will note that item 7 on this Council agenda is about Hydrocarbon gas exploration and I refer to paragraph 8.3 of that report which confirms that the Council's emerging policy on Mineral Working (MD17) mirrors guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (Para 147) in advising:-

'Proposals for the working of unconventional hydrocarbons should clearly distinguish between exploration, appraisal and production phases and must demonstrate that they can satisfactorily address constraints on production and processing within areas that are licensed for oil and gas exploration or production. Particular consideration will be given to the need for comprehensive information and controls relevant to the protection of water resources'.