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Committee and Date

Council

24th September 2020

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2020

Virtual Meeting

10.00 am - 3.55 pm

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes

Email: julie.fildes@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257723

Present

Councillors Ann Hartley and Peter Nutting (Leader)

Councillors Vince Hunt (Speaker), Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader), Peter Adams, Roy Aldcroft, Nicholas Bardsley, Joyce Barrow, Thomas Biggins, Ed Bird, Andy Boddington, Gwendoline Burgess, Gwilym Butler, Karen Calder, Dean Carroll, Lee Chapman, Ted Clarke, Gerald Dakin, Steve Davenport, Julian Dean, Pauline Dee, David Evans, Roger Evans, Hannah Fraser, Rob Gittins, Kate Halliday, Simon Harris, Nigel Hartin, Nick Hignett, Ruth Houghton, Richard Huffer, Roger Hughes, Ioan Jones, Simon Jones, Mark Jones, Christian Lea, Robert Macey, Jane MacKenzie, Chris Mellings, Paul Milner, David Minnery, Dan Morris, Pamela Moseley, Alan Mosley, Cecilia Motley, Peggy Mullock, Kevin Pardy, William Parr, Vivienne Parry, Tony Parsons, Malcolm Pate, Alexander Phillips, Lezley Picton, Ed Potter, John Price, Keith Roberts, Madge Shington, Robert Tindall, Dave Tremellen, Kevin Turley, David Turner, David Vasmer, Claire Wild, Brian Williams, Michael Wood, Tina Woodward and Paul Wynn

113 Apologies for Absence

The Acting Interim Chief Executive reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors T Huffer, Kidd, Morris, Mullock and Winwood.

114 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

Councillor N Hartin declared that he was a Member of SpARC Leisure and would not take part in the debate of Agenda Item 12.

Councillor H Houghton declared an interest in Agenda Items 12 and 14.

115 Minutes of the meetings held on 27th February and 6th May 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2020 and 6th May 2020, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

116 Announcements

Chairman's Engagements

The Chairman referred Members to the list of official engagements carried out by himself and the Chairman since the meeting of the Council on 27th February 2020, which had been circulated by email prior to the meeting.

117 Public Questions (Pages 87 - 92)

Public Questions

The Speaker advised that six public questions had been received from Mr Parton, Mr Femor, Mr Streetly, Mr Tate, Mr Holmes-Brown on behalf of Shropshire Ethnic Minority Alliance and Ms Dolphin. All questions were read aloud on the questioners' behalf by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and received answers from the respective Portfolio Holders. Mr Femor, Mr Tate and Mr Streetly were advised that written answers would be provided.

It was noted that a copy of the questions and answers would be included with the formal record of the meeting.

Petitions

The Speaker advised that a petition bearing more than 1,000 signatures to remove the Clive of India Statue from Shrewsbury Town Centre had been received from Mr Jake Thomson requesting a debate. Mr Thomson did not provide a written submission

Members debated the petition and made the following points:

- The Black Lives Matter debate welcomed;
- It was important to understand other's experiences and injustices;
- Clive was now recognised a corrupt mercenary;
- A better explanation of the history of Clive was required; and
- It was not possible to rewrite history but it was important to be able to understand it.

The Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration responded by thanking the petitioner for the work he had undertaken in presenting the petition. He continued that it was a divisive debate but all agreed that there was no place for racism. To remove the statue was not as simple as it would seem. It was classified as a grade 2 listed building and its removal or destruction would require approval from Historic England. He acknowledged that the colonial past of Britain was a reality and should not be forgotten but used to inform the future. Museum staff had been requested to provide a better interpretation of the statue and locate this appropriately.

RESOLVED:

That no action be taken.

118 Financial Outturn 2019/20

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support, Councillor Minnery and seconded by the Leader, Councillor Nutting, that the report of the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance on the Financial Outturn 2019/20, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Responding to concerns raised by Members on higher than expected expenditure, reduced revenue and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Leader responded that the Council held excellent financial reserves, but the revenue account had been affected. He continued that discussions were in progress with both the Local Government Association and the County Council Network to address the underfunding of rural Councils and the Government's Fairer Funding review was expected to address the situation.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support added that the shortfall was being monitored and contingency arrangements were in place.

RESOLVED

- i) That it be noted that the outturn for the revenue budget for 2019/20 is a controllable overspend of £1.692m. This represents 0.3% of the original gross budget of £568.489m.
- ii) That it be noted that had £0.460m of the Council's General Fund not been applied in response to the Storm Dennis emergency event, and had £0.387m Coronavirus funding not been applied to revenue at year end, the controllable outturn position would have been an overspend of £2.539m.
- iii) That it be noted that the level of the General Fund balance after adjusting for the outturn overspend and insurance position stands at £13.510m, which is significantly below the recommended level.
- iv) That it be noted that the outturn for the Housing Revenue Account for 2019/20 is an underspend of £4.106m and the level of the Housing Revenue Account reserve stands at £10.140m (2018/19 £9.813m).
- v) That it be noted that the increase in the level of Earmarked Reserves and Provisions (excluding delegated school balances) of £1.931 in 2019/20 and the reasons for this.
- vi) That it be noted that the level of school balances stand at £1.891m (2018/19 £4.178m).
- vii) That the net budget variations of £9.710m to the 2019/20 capital programme, detailed in Appendix 5 / Table 11 and the re-profiled 2019/20 capital budget of £70.982m be approved.
- viii) That the re-profiled capital budgets of £127.309m for 2020/21, including slippage of £11.773m from 2019/20, £89.835m for 2021/22 and £103.110m for 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix 5 / Table 15 be approved.
- ix) That the outturn expenditure set out in Appendix 5 of £59.209m, representing 83% of the revised capital budget for 2019/20 be accepted.

- x) That retaining a balance of capital receipts set aside of £19.619m as at 31st March 2020 to generate a one-off Minimum Revenue Provision saving of £0.693m in 2020/21 be approved.

119 **Community Infrastructure Levy - Spending Update**

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place Planning and Regeneration, Councillor Butler and seconded by the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, Councillor Davenport that the report of the Director of Place on the Community Infrastructure Levy – Spending Update, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That £8,142,487 of CIL local funds be allocated to the two projects outlined within Section 6 of the report.

120 **Sustainable Temporary Housing Solutions in Shropshire**

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Planning, Councillor Macey and seconded by Councillor M Jones, that the report of the Director of Adult Services on the Sustainable Temporary Housing Solutions in Shropshire, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Councillor Macey thanked and acknowledged the contribution of hotels and bed and breakfast establishments in Shropshire working with the Council to provide accommodation to those in need from the onset of the lockdown. The work of the Housing Team and volunteers was also noted.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the outline financial case set out in this report be approved, together with the delivery of the outcomes set out in section 4 of this report and at Appendix 1 to acquire suitable properties for homeless temporary accommodation.
- ii) That subject to a final business case and financial appraisals being approved in accordance with Recommendation iii:
 - a. That the acquisition of freehold interest of open market property in support of recommendation 2.1 up to maximum price of £1.5 million plus stamp duty, VAT and any other disbursements and associated costs be approved.
 - b. that capital investment estimated to be £1.5m of S106 contributions is made to allow the freehold acquisition, adaptation and fit out of appropriate properties in Shropshire be approved.

- c. that long-term leases with private landlords can be entered on open market property in support of recommendation 2.1 utilising existing revenue budgets be approved.
 - d. That delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Asset Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration, with the authority to agree and complete appropriate freehold acquisitions or long-term leases in accordance with recommendation 2.1, 2.2A and 2.2C.
 - e. Delegate to the Strategic Asset Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration, the authority to enter into leases/contracts with partners/providers to manage facilities on the Council's behalf if deemed relevant and necessary.
- iii) That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance (s151 officer) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support to approve a final business case and financial appraisals setting out the financial arrangements to support the acquisition of appropriate properties and to approve the appropriate source of the funding based on existing and future S106 contributions for any purchase.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.30am and reconvened at 11.40am

121 Shrewsbury Civic Centre Project

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration, Councillor Charmley and seconded by the Leader, Councillor Nutting, that the report of the Director of Place on the Shrewsbury Civic Centre Project, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Councillor Charmley gave an overview of the report which proposed that further work on the Shirehall building redevelopment be ceased. He explained that since Council had resolved to redevelop the Shirehall in December 2018 circumstances had markedly changed with the declaration of the climate change emergency, floods and the covid-19 pandemic. It was now recognised that it would not be possible to transform the inefficiencies of the building into one that would meet the future needs of the organisation.

Councillor Andy Boddington tabled an amendment which was duly seconded by Councillor Viv Parry. He proposed that recommendations A B C remain as set out in the report with the addition of:

- D. Delegates to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration work on a potential disposal strategy for Shirehall.
- E. This venture is renamed Shropshire Civic Centre Project to reflect its importance to the entire county.

- F. A report covering the work in B C D will be provided to the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee prior to consideration by Council.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost with the majority voting against it.

A debate was held with the following points considered:

- The carbon inefficiency and running costs of Shirehall;
- The impact of staff home working on both the environment and the health and safety of employees;
- The impact of the closure of the Shirehall site on the surrounding economy and the future use of the site; and
- Potential loss of solar panels and mobile phone mast on Shirehall roof.

In response to the debate the Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration reiterated that a new site for the Civic Hub had not yet been identified. He continued that more flexible working would be introduced for the benefit of the staff and would not be imposed when it was unsuitable.

RESOLVED:

- i) Work be ceased on the project which involves the full refurbishment of the Shirehall building.
- ii) Delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration, to provide a full evaluation of potential civic centre locations in Shrewsbury town centre along with outline costs and benefits.
- iii) Delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration, to work on a potential disposal strategy for the Shirehall.
- iv) A report covering the work in ii and iii be provided to Performance Management Scrutiny Committee prior to consideration by Council.

122 Virtual Planning Committee Process

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place Planning and Regeneration, Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Motley, that the report of the Planning Service Manager on the Virtual Planning Committee Process, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Councillor Roger Evans proposed the recommendation set out in the report be replaced with following the amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Vasmer.

That Members recognise urgent decisions were made to create a process to allow Planning Committees to meet and make decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, Members request that Officers review this process and take note of how other councils have enabled the public to participate. A report of this review to be

taken to a meeting of Group Leaders and a decision made there on the virtual planning committee procedures to be applied for the duration as set out in the regulations made under the Coronavirus Act 2020 or as amended.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost with the majority voting against it.

The request for a recorded vote was not supported.

RESOLVED:

That it be agreed that the virtual planning committee procedures to be applied as necessary in the view of the Director of Place and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the planning committees for the duration set out in the regulations made under Coronavirus Act 2020 or as amended.

123 Local Government Ombudsman Report - Finding of Fault with Injustice

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Nutting, and seconded by Councillor Gittings that the report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services on the Local Government Ombudsman Report – Finding of Fault with Injustice, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

The Leader observed that lessons would be learnt from this decision and it was important that the rights of local communities were given sufficient weight when making planning decisions.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the LGSCO report attached at Appendix 1 and the actions taken to date, together with those proposed, in order to comply with the LGSCO's recommendations be noted.

124 Portfolio Holder Report - Lezley Picton: Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications

It was proposed by Councillor Picton, Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, Waste and Communications that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

Councillor Picton presented and amplified her report and responded to questions, concerns and comments.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted and approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.11pm and reconvened at 1.21pm

125 Portfolio Holder Annual Report - Councillor Steve Davenport for Highways and Transport

It was proposed by Councillor Davenport, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

Councillor Davenport presented and amplified his report and responded to questions, concerns and comments.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted and approved.

126 Report of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care/Public Health and Climate Change

It was proposed by Councillor Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care/ Public Health and Climate Change that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

Councillor Carroll presented and amplified his report and responded to questions, concerns and comments.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted and approved.

127 Annual Report 2019/20 Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Calder that the annual report of the Annual Report of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes be received and agreed.

Councillor Calder presented the report and outlined the work undertaken by the Committee. She thanked all Members and Officers involved in the work of the Committee for their hard work and commitment.

RESOLVED:

That that Annual Report of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted and approved.

128 Motions

- 1. The following motion was received from Councillor Julian Dean and supported by Councillors Hannah Fraser, Pauline Dee and David Vasmer**

Pension Fund Fossil Fuel Disinvestment motion

Council notes:

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils have both declared climate emergencies and pledged to be net zero by 2030.

Shropshire County Pension Fund (SCPF) currently has around £294 million invested in fossil fuel companies including Shell and BP and through asset manager BlackRock.

These investments are incompatible with the climate emergency declaration and the councils' commitment to reach net zero within the next ten years.

Fossil fuel investments are increasingly financially risky as a result of both the Covid19 pandemic and the global transition to a more sustainable economic and environmental model. They are now being regularly out-performed by renewables.

Former Bank of England Governor Mark Carney warned in December 2019 that fossil fuel investments risk becoming "stranded assets" (i.e., worthless) as investors exit the sector. "A question for every company, every financial institution, every asset manager, pension fund or insurer – what's your plan?"

The 'engagement' approach does not mitigate the financial risks the sector faces. There is also no evidence of any multinational corporation changing its core business model in response to investor pressure.

Council believes it is time for Shropshire's flagship pension fund to commit to divestment from fossil fuels over a three-year timeframe.

This would;

Allow for the development of 'impact investment' directed towards internationally recognised sustainable development goals and/or investment in a local sustainable economy.

Provide for a more sustainable future of all pension fund stakeholders.

Provide leadership in the face of the climate emergency.

This Council resolves:

To instruct the Acting Chief Executive to write to the Pension Fund Committee asking the Committee to follow best practice by;

1. Adding a statement to their strategy that climate change constitutes financial risks to the fund.
2. Setting a 3-year timescale for the reinvestment of funds currently invested in fossil fuel dependant assets.
3. Developing an investment strategy consistent with sustainable development goals and developing a local sustainable economy.

Finally, we recognise that fossil fuel investments constitute part of the councils 'carbon footprint' and so resolve that this element should be reported on within our greenhouse gas reporting for Scope 3.

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Motion be supported.

2. The following motion was received from Councillor David Vasmer and is supported by the Liberal Democrat Group

This Council notes that:

- As COVID-19 restrictions ease, the Government is encouraging people to walk and cycle, where possible, instead of taking public transport or returning to their cars.
- The Government has stated that it aims to have all school children returning to school in September 2020.
- The Government has specifically stated that it wishes more children to walk and cycle to school.
- To enable this the Government has announced a £250 million 'Emergency Active Travel Fund' for temporary infrastructure to enable safe walking and cycling – of which, Shropshire has been allocated an indicative funding allocation of £432,000. 20% of this money was available in 'tranche one' (June 2020), the remaining 80% is available in 'tranche two' (Summer 2020).
- The Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, issued new Statutory Guidance on 9 May to all Highways Authorities, requiring them to deliver 'transformative change' within an urgent timeframe.
- Measures listed under the Statutory Guidance include (but are not limited to) 'pop-up' cycle facilities, widening footways, 'school streets' schemes, and reducing speed limits.
- The guidance further states that 'measures should be taken as swiftly as possible, and in any event within weeks, given the urgent need to change travel habits before the restart takes full effect.'
- The Department for Transport wrote to councils in the week commencing 22nd June 2020 about their award from 'tranche 1'. This letter stated that they had "been asked to convey from ministers that they would like to see proposals of an even higher level for tranche two".
- Speaking in front of the Transport Select Committee on 24th June 2020, the Secretary of State stated "We want to make sure that we reprioritise the way that local authorities think about road space so that they think about putting walking and cycling as the first two of those—possibly e-scooters as well since they are coming along—and driving as the next thing, rather than how we just construct it around the car and the other things will have to fit in around vehicles."
- 'School Streets' restrict motor traffic at the school gates for a short period of time, generally at drop-off and pick-up times.

- 'School Streets' improve road safety for pupils, encouraging active travel to school (and a modal shift out of cars). They also enable social distancing outside schools, and additionally improve the air quality and environment at the school gates.
- Prior to COVID-19, 'school streets' schemes have already been successfully introduced or were being trialled at multiple local authorities across the UK*.
- Since then, planning and implementation of 'school streets' has accelerated, with many more councils introducing these schemes before schools reopened in June.
- Multiple NGOs are calling for the introduction of 'school streets' to manage social distancing at the school gate.
- Councils are introducing the measures under their own considerable statutory powers, making experimental traffic orders where necessary.
- Shropshire Council has already made a number of road alterations to assist with active travel and social distancing associated to town centres, but none specifically targeted at schools. It has also taken the first step to improve safety outside schools by adopting a 20mph blanket policy for all schools in December 2019
- As promoted by the Secretary of State, this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to take the next step and positively impact travel choices, including the associated benefits on health, air quality and road safety.
- Research from Sustrans following trials of School Streets says that 90% of parents and residents surveyed say they would support regular traffic-free streets outside schools.

* Including but not limited to: Birmingham City Council, Bristol City Council, Cardiff Council, The City of Edinburgh Council, Glasgow City Council, Greater Manchester, Leeds City Council, Sheffield City Council, Southampton City Council, City of York Council, and many London Boroughs.

This Council agrees to follow Government guidance and work collaboratively with councillors, schools, and local partners to:

- a) swiftly identify those schools in the county that could put a 'school streets' scheme in place
- b) have 'school streets' in place at these schools by the first day of the new school term in September – taking advantage of experimental traffic orders and new statutory guidance over fast-tracked Traffic Regulation Orders
- c) introduce measures to promote walking and cycling in those schools that are not suitable for a 'school streets' scheme

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Motion be supported.

3. The following motion was received from Councillor David Vasmer and is supported by the Liberal Democrat Group

This Council notes that:

Due to the COVID-19 virus it is noted that there are a reduced number of meetings being held. This has led to long delays in publishing the minutes of meetings that have been held.

We note that Parish and Town Councils are expected to publish minutes of their meetings within 4 weeks of the them being held. This to be in draft form if a meeting has not been held to formally ratify them. This is good practise and enables both the public and members to be better informed on matters that are discussed and agreed.

It is therefore proposed that:

- This council meeting requests officers to put in place a policy similar to our local councils and publish minutes of all public meetings within 4 weeks of their being held. This to be in draft form if no formal meeting has taken place. This will enable all members and the public to be aware of what was discussed and agreed at our council meetings.
- This revised policy to be effective from the date of this council meeting.

Note. For information please see two extracts from the

“Transparency code for smaller authorities” published by the **Department for Communities and Local Government**

P4 Policy context.

1, This Code is issued to meet the Government’s desire to place more power into citizens’ hands to increase democratic accountability. Transparency gives local people the tools and information they need to hold local public bodies to account.

P9 Minutes, agendas and papers of formal meetings.

29. Smaller authorities should publish the draft minutes from all formal meetings (i.e. full council or board, committee and sub-committee meetings) not later than one month after the meeting has taken place. These minutes should be signed either at the meeting they were taken or at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Motion be not supported.

4. The following motion has been received from Councillor Nat Green and is supported by the Liberal Democrat Group

As a result of recent demonstrations, a spotlight has fallen upon various monuments to individuals who, upon examination, had controversial aspects to their lives that some argue are offensive to contemporary eyes, and that their behaviour should not be worthy of such public commemoration. In Shrewsbury, this takes the form of the statue of Robert Clive that stands in The Square. It is clear that passions have run high on both sides of the argument and, noting the trying times that we find ourselves in, this motion is intended to take a measured, democratic

approach to a fraught issue. In light of this, as member for the Division in which this statue stands, I propose the following:

That first, a history board should be placed adjacent to the statue giving a balanced narrative of Clive and his history.

Then second, after an information campaign in the media and perhaps through public meetings, a referendum of the people of Shropshire is held on whether Clive should stay, or go; with options as to his replacement should his removal be required. After all, it is their town and their Square.

By taking this course of action, Shropshire Council will have shown itself mindful both of contemporary sensibilities, but not have been seen to have discarded the past on a whim.

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Motion be not supported.

129 Questions from Members

The Speaker advised that six questions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15. A copy of the report containing the detailed questions and formal response is attached to the signed minutes.

Received from Councillor Pardy and answered by the Leader in relation to the provision of Member Training.

Received from Councillor Parry and answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, in relation to the cutting of grass verges. By way of a supplementary question Councillor Parry asked about the future involvement of the Council in improving the verges. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that this was already in place.

Received from Councillor Boddington and answered by the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place Planning and Regulation Services, in relation to Planning Committees. By way of a supplementary question Councillor Boddington asked if the decisions made at agenda planning meetings for the Planning Committees could be made available to Members. The Portfolio Holder for Communities Place Planning and Regulation Services responded that he would provide a written response.

Received from Councillor Vasmer and answered by the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place Planning and Regulation Services, in relation to planning enforcement. By way of a supplementary question Councillor Vasmer asked if the increasing number of unresolved planning enforcements had an identified cause. The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place Planning and Regulation Services responded that the increase in cases was a result of increased development by none professionals.

Received from Councillor T Huffer and answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, in relation to support for young people during and after lockdown.

Received from Councillor Tremellen and answered by the Leader, in relation to about future working practices of the Council.

130 **Appointments to Committees**

It was proposed by the Speaker, Councillor V Hunt, and seconded by the Chairman, Councillor A Hartley, that the changes to committee memberships be considered and agreed.

RESOLVED:

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Ruth Houghton and Cllr Viv Parry to replace Cllr David Vasmer as substitute members of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Performance Management Scrutiny Committee

Cllr David Vasmer to become a substitute member of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

Place Overview Committee

Cllr Andy Boddington to replace Cllr David Vasmer as a full member of the Place Overview Committee.

Cllr David Vasmer to become a substitute member of the Place Overview Committee.

People Overview Committee

Cllr Ruth Houghton to replace Cllr David Vasmer as a full member of the People Overview Committee.

Cllr David Vasmer to replace Cllr Roger Evans as a substitute member of the People Overview Committee.

Standards Committee

Cllr David Vasmer to become a substitute member of the Standards Committee.

131 **Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report of the Meeting held on 24th June 2020**

It was proposed by Councillor Mellings and seconded by Councillor Roberts that the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, be received and noted.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 24th June 2020 be noted

132 Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4[3] of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item.

133 Exempt Minutes of 27th February 2020

RESOLVED:

That the exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2020 as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:

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COUNCIL 16/07/20

Public Questions

Question from:	Mike Streetly (on behalf of Sustainable Transport Shropshire)
Subject:	Spend on provision/maintenance of infrastructure
Portfolio Holder:	Steve Davenport
Director:	James Walton

QUESTION

How much has Shropshire Council spent on provision/maintenance of infrastructure for people using bikes over each of the last three years and how much is planned for this financial year? Please include an indication of the source of funding for the spend as well.

RESPONSE

Spend for the last three years has been £1,022 on revenue and £5,144 on capital.

Please see details of capital spend below and expenditure on cycle path/routes.

Capital Spend

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total
ITP Central - Spring Gardens Cyclepath / St Michaels Street	603	0	0	603
ITP South - Pontesbury to Minsterley Cycle Path	4,541	0	0	4,541
Total				5,144

Cycle Path/Routes Expenditure

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total
Cycle Way connecting Sedgeford & Beech Ave, Whitchurch – Light Inspections	156.97			
Cycle Path connecting Sutton Rd & Pritchard Way, Shrewsbury – tree clearance		127.21		
Cycle Path connecting Oak Lane & Gains Ave, Shrewsbury – Lamp Change	84.31			
Cycle Path connecting Oak Lane & Gains Ave, Shrewsbury – Litter/Waste Clearance		74.04	143.55	
Cycle Way connecting Sutton Rd & Oteley Rd – Litter/Waste Clearance		5.79	17.88	
Greenfields Cycleways – Litter/Waste Clearance		33.15		
Hatton Way Cyclepath – Light Inspections	223.92	155.27		
Total	465.20	395.46	161.43	1022.09

Question from:	Graham Tate
Subject:	20 mph Speed Limit
Portfolio Holder:	Steve Davenport
Director:	Mark Barrow
QUESTION	
<p>The following motion was passed by Shropshire Council on 19 December 2019:</p> <p>'This Council supports the principle of a 20 mph speed limit outside all schools in the county and asks officers to bring a report to Council within 6 months to consider how this could be implemented.'</p> <p>St Georges Junior and Woodfield Infant Schools are located on the very busy 30mph speed limit Copthorne Road, made all the busier by the 228 dwelling Copthorne Keep development and emergency traffic that has to make its way to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. When can Shropshire Council assure local residents and the schools that their safety concerns are being heeded by the implementation of the December 2019 motion?</p>	
RESPONSE	
<p>Thank you for your question. A report is being prepared and presented to Full Council in September relating to the response to the Councils approved motion of implementing 20mph outside of all Shropshire Schools. The report will address the concerns raised and has been derived from discussions with colleagues in Highways, Transport and Education.</p> <p>The report will provide a proposed implementation plan and timescales for achieving Councils approved motion.</p>	

Question from:	David Parton
Subject:	Robert Clive Statue
Portfolio Holder:	Steve Charmley
Director:	Mark Barrow
QUESTION	
<p>Has Shropshire Council considered its public sector equality duty, to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act, when debating the future of the Robert Clive statue in The Square, Shrewsbury? If so, is Shropshire Council confident that any possible decision by Shropshire Council to retain the statue will not adversely affect people protected under the Equality Act?</p>	
RESPONSE	
<p>Any decision taken will take into account the Council's responsibility under the Public Sector Equalities Duty, as applicable.</p>	

Question from:	Mark Fermor
Subject:	20 mph

Portfolio Holder:	Steven Davenport
Director:	Mark Barrow

QUESTION

In response to my question on 15 June in which I stated:

‘The most significant change that the Council can make to increase cycling across Shropshire and show a commitment to active travel will be to introduce a default 20mph speed limit on residential streets. This will entail very limited cost and can be done immediately. Will the Council make this change?’

You did not answer my question but did refer to an intention to introduce 20mph zones outside schools. I would urge you to reconsider because I believe the effect of this would be, counter to your intentions, to encourage parents to drive children to drop off in the ‘safe zone’ that you create, instead of creating a safe environment for children to walk and cycle to school. What is needed clearly is safer roads between home and school, not a limited zone outside schools. What is also needed is for Shropshire Council to signal a shift of priority towards active travel and support for all those who are ‘walking the talk’ on climate and healthy lifestyles rather than continuing to put the car as a higher priority.

You also mentioned that we need ‘a more strategic approach, policy development and a cycling and walking plan supported in a council approved Local Transport Plan is a key development that needs to be brought forward’.

Given the encouragement of new government policy, the cash available if you can show you have a plan this summer, and the urgent need to address our climate emergency, please can you now confirm that you have been able to bring this forward, and what date the residents of Shropshire can expect to see a draft for consultation.

There is a tremendous amount of goodwill and good ideas for improving our cycling infrastructure across Shropshire, but all communications to Shropshire Council on these topics seem to go into a communications black hole due to lack of a nominated officer who can act as a point of contact for communications and lead on cycling. Please can you now announce a nominated point of contact so that the people of Shropshire can engage in dialogue on the excellent initiatives and ideas that are out there.

RESPONSE

The issue of implementing a default 20 mph zone across all residential streets has been previously examined by this Council via its Scrutiny process. The policy of where safety concerns are identified and receive local support continues and there are a number of 20 mph zones across the county. That said, the council is bringing forward a report to its September Council meeting which will recommend a plan and timetable with resources to support 20mph for all schools, this principle was approved by Council and the delivery plan will be presented for approval. This will have a significant impact for schools and safety, if the plan is approved and as the possible interventions begin to have their desired impact.

Further, the council is developing its Local Transport Plan (LTP4) this will include policy and recommendations for active travel and of course cycling and walking, and this will provide the necessary policy considerations for the council on Active Travel. As the work develops a number of interest groups and stakeholders will be engaged and consulted with as this key strategic document is developed, indeed the work on LTP 4 has been adjusted to include Active Travel and considers the

work on movement strategies that is being currently developed in some of our key towns such as Shrewsbury / Oswestry. Hence a key strategic document will come forward for consideration that presents a Local Transport Plan for Shropshire with a specific requirement for Active Travel following engagement and consultation over the remainder of this year.

I would also wish to make the point that building in a 7.3km segregated cycle lane into the North West Relief Road and that any junction has been optimised for cycling and walking provision and also provision for the pedestrian overbridge to support active travel, the current 1,800 miles of promoted cycle ways currently available for use and developing plans for a new business and service model for the Park and Ride considering interchange hubs linked to active travel, and the temporary footways that have been installed to assist with social distancing in our town centres shows that Active Travel is now forming a key part of this councils approach to transport, also considering the impact upon Carbon reduction that these interventions would also bring.

Further, this council is developing a capital bid to the Department of Transport for Active Travel, this specifically considers walking and cycling interventions; a working group is developing the initial proposals for the Bid. It should be noted that the time period from the guidance being received and necessary criteria to the bid being submitted to government is in total 19 working days and possible schemes are being worked up in order to respond to the governments timetable. That said, this council will be submitting a bid for interventions to support cycling and walking as part of a competitive bid process for active travel. It's important to note that there is a competitive bid process and finance is not guaranteed or yet received, albeit each authority had been provided with an indicative allocation of finance which could increase or reduce depending on the final allocation of funds distributed nationally. As stated previously, some initial schemes have already been implemented to support cycling (New Street Shrewsbury etc) and others will come forward. This work continues in parallel with the social distancing work that is still required in our towns.

Any dialogue or engagement on developing these plans within the timetable set by government and liaison via Strategic Highways Team Strategic.Highways@shropshire.gov.uk, and this team will engage and liaise on active travel, cycling and other key areas of work including the development of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) as referred to previously. I would also add that information and plans will be placed on the council web site along with the interventions on social distancing for background and information as we move forward on this agenda.

I hope this response assists in resolving the issues raised.

Question from:	Emma Dolphin
Subject:	Robert Clive Statue
Portfolio Holder:	Steve Charmley
Director:	Mark Barrow
QUESTION	
Further to our communications on Friday 10 July I would like to submit a Public Question for the councillors to consider at their meeting on Thursday 16 July, My question is as follows:	
" Are the councillors aware that there is a petition started by a local resident on Change.org.uk which to date has nearly 9,000 signatures and still rising which asks that the Robert Clive statue should remain in its place in Shrewsbury and if so will they take that into account in their considerations of the issue?".	

RESPONSE

This petition was not sent in time for the agenda for this meeting but is being raised through this Public question

Question from:	Alexander Jordan Holmes-Brown
Subject:	Robert Clive Statue
Portfolio Holder:	Steve Charmley
Director:	Mark Barrow

QUESTION

To be read verbatim please. CC'ing in the two petition-makers who's own statement(s) are well summarised in the petitions themselves. And CC'ing in Councillor Kuldip Sahota, whose letter we quote in the

[Start]

Due to the restriction of having only 550 words with which to address you, from 900: Please forgive us for getting right into a description of the legacy of Robert Clive that we share to you with heavy hearts for our forebears whose story this also is:

He made his fortune, along with other East India Company employees, from other people's misery.

Edmund Burke [...] outlining the case against Robert Clive and Lord Hasting in Parliament, said, "Cruelties unheard of and devastations almost without name, crimes which have their rise in the wicked dispositions of men in avarice, rapacity, pride, cruelty, malignity, haughtiness, insolence". He then went on to describe in detail the violation of a poor Bengali woman who was unable to pay her tax; "They dragged her out, naked and exposed to the public view, and scourged before all the people....they put the nipples of the woman into sharp edges of split bamboos and tore them from her body."

[...] Durant in his book, "The Case for India" writes, "East India Company was utterly without scruple or principal, bribing, murdering, annexing and stealing---tax defaulters were confined in cages and exposed to the burning sun---parents sold their children to meet the rising tax---victims land being confiscated----for the first time in Indian history the landless peasant were deprived of their traditional source of sustenance."

[...]

Robert Clive committed suicide in 1774 and was buried quietly at night time in an unmarked grave. Dr Samuel Johnson, the famous man of English letters commented that "Clive had acquired his fortune by such crimes that his conscience impelled him to cut his own throat."

The noted historian William Dalrymple has referred to Clive as an "unstable sociopath." There is extensive evidence of how Clive acquired his fortune and how he was ridiculed and lampooned in his own lifetime. His nickname in the popular press of the time was 'Lord Vulture'. One commentator wrote that he was, "Utterly deaf to every sentiment of justice and humanity, and his greed knows no bounds."

You will each recognise those words from the Open Letter written by Telford Councillor Kuldip Sahota. The entire content of that letter you each received is our shared sentiment on the human cost of Clive's misdeeds. That letter received scant reply from Shropshire Councillors. The weight of it is *our* weight. Its words are *our* words, us grandchildren of that legacy.

We are presenting you the question of: which path we will take going forward, you as Council and us as constituents? There seems to be three options, two of which are acceptable to us.

1. To keep the statue and status quo as is, unheeding to the ethnic minority coalition writing you now.
2. To replace the statue with Eglantyne Jebb, Agnes Hunt, or Wilfred Owen, figures we can all be proud of and enjoy.
3. To keep the statue but to attach to it an appropriate plaque detailing in brief how Clive's fame and fortune arose.

Paths two and three are more than reasonable. We will enthusiastically support either one enjoined by programs for teaching the history of colonial/imperial legacy in Shropshire in consultation with us. Thank you for listening.

RESPONSE

Shropshire Museums supports an open public discussion of the statue's future. We believe we should not erase controversial history but, rather than celebrate and glorify such people and events, find appropriate ways to mark and learn from them.

Today, as a society, we are finally facing up to painful and shameful periods in our history and having to address subjects cause real distress to some members of our community, especially when they aren't managed sensitively. The way we interpret the past is hugely important and as a Museum Service we are still learning how best to address its most painful and challenging aspects.

Shropshire Museums holds a number of objects relating to Lord Clive but our galleries do not deal with his story directly. We have a loan agreement with the National Trust which displays some of these items at Powys Castle's Clive Museum. Currently Shropshire Museums is working with partners both within Shropshire Council and beyond to find the best way to interpret both Clive's legacy and our nations colonial past.

This is a process that will take time to do well and do right. In furthering this, the Shropshire Museum Services is preparing a grant application to better interpret the colonial period within the Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery.

We are grateful for your comments which are helping shape this debate and your support whilst we move forward.