

MEMBER QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

COUNCILLOR ROY ALDCROFT will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport

“Would Shropshire Council agree that the proposal from HS2 to route construction traffic through the village of Woore would have an appalling effect on the village. The suggestion that 500 trucks per day could pass through the village during the construction phase of the HS2 project would have a severe effect on the environment and fabric of the village. It would also cause congestion with existing commuter traffic.

Would the Council write to HS2 , recognising the benefits of the HS2 project to the area but urging them to reconsider this route and consider the alternatives proposed by the Action Group and Woore Parish. “

COUNCILLOR STEVE DAVENPORT the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport will reply:

Shropshire Council has engaged fully with HS2 and Woore Parish Council to date as part of the current HS2 Hybrid Bill. This was deposited into Parliament on the 18th July 2017. A consultation, through the DfT is now running until the 30th September 2018. It is understood that the local community and the Parish Council have both made representations as part of this consultation, and that all relevant historical information relating to Council Highways traffic schemes in Woore has been shared with the Parish Council in support of this.

HS2 has met with Shropshire Council (28th April 2017), and also met with Woore Parish Council and Shropshire Council on 14th November 2017, along with Owen Paterson MP. Shropshire Council and the Parish Councils engagement with HS2 is ongoing.

Shropshire Councils priority remains the removal, or minimising the impact, of the HS2 construction phase on Shropshire’s roads and communities. As such, it has consistently advocated the consideration of access routes by HS2 that would ensure this, in line with the Parish Councils position, and the request made within the Members question.

On the completion of the current Bill consultation, Shropshire Council has undertaken to continue to work with local communities and HS2 in order to effectively manage any mitigation measures required on publication of HS2s preferred access option. At this time, it is understood that more detailed information on local traffic levels and the requirements for local highway enhancements will be made available.

It is also understood from HS2 that any works to facilitate construction access are likely to occur in the first quarter of 2021. The highway modifications are proposed to be temporary at the outset, and the detailed design of any highway modifications are to be approved by Shropshire Council before construction. If it is considered that any modifications would be beneficial to local communities in the longer term, they could also be retained beyond the construction phase.

QUESTION 2

COUNCILLOR JULIAN DEAN will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport.

“Widespread disruption and injuries, caused by the snowfall, over the weekend of the 8th and 9th December 2017 were experienced by those we serve. Many required hospital treatment for fractures from slipping on untreated surfaces. The Saturday after the snow event saw a street market in the square, but the area did not seem to have been treated or cleared to make it safe for shoppers and traders.

From listening to the concerns of my constituents, and from reading the local media, it is clear that there are serious questions the Council must answer.

What plans were in place to treat pavements, and thereby provide a necessary service to pedestrians that was provided to other road users?

Is the Council satisfied with its performance and execution of its Winter Service Plan with respect to the treatment of, and subsequent condition of, primary roads?

What feedback have you had concerning Emergency Service vehicle access to the Town Centre during this period? Was access compromised and if so for how long?

What, if any, failings in the plan were experienced?

Was this winter event considered within the Council's Winter Service Plan? If not, why not?

What advice from the Met Office was taken when developing the plan?

Winter weather is unpredictable and weather patterns are changing. Is this fact being considered with the Council's Winter Service Plan? If so, how?

What can I tell my constituents, some of whom were injured by slipping on untreated surfaces, about how we dealt with this event and what lessons have been drawn for the future?

Many people want to help treat and clear paths but the advice from Central Government is considered by many as being too vague. Will the Council consider publishing clear advice on how the public can engage and help to treat and clear footpaths? ‘

COUNCILLOR STEVE DAVENPORT the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport will reply:

THIS REPLY WILL FOLLOW

QUESTION 3

COUNCILLOR DAVID TURNER will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Adult Social Care

The death of two men in their thirties in Much Wenlock in the past two months came a shock to the community, and their families will clearly never overcome their sense of loss.

Inquests have yet to take place on these and another death at Admaston since Christmas. It would therefore be inappropriate to comment further on them here. However, widely reported cases of Shropshire men in their thirties taking their own lives at Chorley in June 2016, and at Hungerford in December of the same year, serve to highlight that suicide is now the leading – and increasing – cause of premature mortality in men younger than 50. There are a number of occupations where the incidence of suicide is high, and one is farming. This is important in Shropshire which is a predominantly rural county and one where farming is a significant activity.

In recent years suicide prevention campaigns have focused on men, who apparently still have a much higher rate than women in all age groups and are more than three times more likely to die by suicide than women. Nonetheless, recent global reports reveal suicide has overtaken maternal mortality as the biggest killer of young women.

Mental Health Services must have adequate risk assessments in place and procedures so that, wherever possible, the risk of suicide is minimised. Whilst we need to understand that men, in particular, who are intent on ending their lives will do just that regardless of what safeguarding procedures are in place. In Shropshire it's important that those with mental health problems, and their families, know how to access support.

Would the Portfolio Holder articulate the measures that are in place locally to provide support and intervention in order that individuals can get their lives back onto an even keel, and so that families do not have to suffer the anguish that has afflicted too many in South Shropshire the last couple of years?

COUNCILLOR LEE CHAPMAN the Portfolio Holder for Health and Adult Social Care will reply:

We recognise that suicide is preventable and that suicide prevention should be everybody's business. Shropshire Council has much to offer in progressing this

agenda which has included the further strengthening of local partnerships in order to draw on the expertise of partners from the public and third sectors.

Although we still have much to do, the progress achieved over the past 18 months has provided a positive infrastructure in order to focus resources targeting the most vulnerable people within our communities and to complement work already being undertaken to improve mental health and wellbeing across Shropshire.

The local measures and progress to provide support and intervention for those at risk/affected by suicide are summarised below.

i). Dedicated Suicide Prevention Network of partner organisations

A pan Shropshire and Telford Suicide Prevention Network was formed in September 2016 at an initial consultation workshop which sought to identify how services and communities could best work together to prevent suicide through early identification of risk, referral to services which could best address individual needs and support people who have been affected by a suicide death.

The Network consists of a wide range of stakeholders with either a direct role in preventing suicide and/or self-harm, supporting people in crisis or those who have an interest in supporting this agenda. The Network currently includes representatives from across health, the Mental Health Trust, both local authorities, blue light services, police, criminal justice, British Transport, voluntary and community organisations.

The role of the Shropshire and Telford Suicide Prevention Network is to share learning/good practice and to strengthen links between the various organisations that are most likely to encounter some of our most vulnerable residents. The group formally meets once a year to share learning and update on progress. At the last annual meeting in September 2017, Network delegates participated in a workshop exercise to identify the range of formal/informal services and community assets which could be better utilised to prevent suicide and self-harm and ensure those at greatest risk are identified and supported at an earlier stage.

We have also recently starting working with Philip Dunne MP to design an event in South Shropshire to raise awareness of suicide risk, promote the range of emotional wellbeing services and provide guidance on how to identify someone at risk of suicide and how to intervene.

ii). Shropshire and Telford Joint All Age Suicide Prevention Strategy

Following the first Suicide Prevention Network workshop in 2016, a Shropshire and Telford Joint All Age Suicide Prevention Strategy was produced by a steering group represented by members from the Network. The Strategy was informed from a combination of discussions from the workshop, local/national data, national guidance and qualitative feedback from Mental Health service users. The aims of the Suicide Prevention Strategy are to;

- Raise awareness of suicide risk,
- Encourage more people to talk about self-harm
- Provide those who have a public facing role to have confidence in signposting people
- Complement and expand work already being undertaken to prevent suicide and self-harm.

The Joint Strategy was officially launched at the September 2017 Suicide Prevention Network Annual meeting (which coincided with World Suicide Prevention Day) and was publicised locally via the Shropshire Council communications team.

Further work is currently underway to design a formal media strategy across partner organisations to reduce stigma associated with suicide and self-harm, raise awareness of support available and co-ordinate with national and local campaigns which can support this agenda (such as World Mental Health).

An electronic copy of the Suicide Prevention Strategy is available on the Shropshire Together Partnership website as well as through many partner sites.

- Direct Link: www.shropshiretogether.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Shropshire-and-Telford-and-Wrekin-Suicide-Prevention-Strategy.pdf
- Shropshire Together Mental Health front page: www.shropshiretogether.org.uk/mental-health/

iii). Shropshire Suicide Prevention Action Group

A Shropshire specific Action Group was also formed during 2017 which is Chaired by a Shropshire Council Public Health representative and with a Vice Chair from Shrewsbury Samaritans. The role for this Action Group has been to identify the Shropshire specific actions required to achieve the ambitions set out in the Strategy and provide momentum to make suicide prevention everyone's business.

The Action Plan has been designed via consultation with Shropshire stakeholders from the Suicide Prevention Network and included an audit of Coroner recorded deaths of suicide and possible suicide. This has helped to identify which groups within Shropshire are at greatest risk of suicide based on recent trends and characteristics which along with the national findings, has provided a more focused target population.

Although there is still much to do, the infrastructure for taking forward the Action Plan is now in place. Operational sub groups of the Action Group have recently been established to progress the key Action work streams, which are summarised below:

- Communications and Media
- Access to support, prevention and care plans

- Using information and data
- Self-harm
- Engaging post suicide
- Training

QUESTION 4

COUNCILLOR PAM MOSELEY will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Adult Social Care

A 2010 Shropshire Council/NHS report (Strategy for Preventive Services in Shropshire 2010-2015) stated that “There is growing evidence that a well-structured programme of prevention and intervention services can improve quality of life for individuals and lead to reduced reliance on high cost services, enhancing and improving health and wellbeing, whilst delivering long term value for money.”

In short, preventative services will make life better for people and save the Council money in the long term.

In the Council’s Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23, a £500,000 reduction in spend on Adult Social Care Preventative Services is identified for 2018/19 as “permanent savings that may be reversible”, with the possibility of the funding being reversed in 2020/21 should the Council’s financial position be improved.

Can the portfolio holder please explain which elements of preventative services will be affected by this £500,000 cut to the budget?

COUNCILLOR LEE CHAPMAN the Portfolio Holder for Health and Adult Social Care will reply:

The £500,000 identified in the financial strategy is an accounting projection and forms part of a 3 year financial plan that utilises the additional Better Care Funding we receive to best effect. It will be replaced in subsequent years.

QUESTION 5

COUNCILLOR ALAN MOSLEY will ask the following question to the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

The purchase of the three shopping centres and other land in the town centre, has been heavily criticised as being a foolhardy and extremely risky venture. These views have been enhanced by the lack of any consultation and scrutiny prior to the decision being taken behind closed doors.

Therefore, will the Leader and the Portfolio Holder please state:

- The arrangements which have been put in place to ensure that there is adequate governance, high quality management and rigorous scrutiny of business strategy, plans and performance.
- What estimates have been envisaged for repairs, maintenance and refurbishment of the shopping centres?
- Are there any contingency plans for dealing with the impact of any further decline in traditional retail trading?
- What have been the total costs of the use of consultants in providing information, advice and acting on behalf of the Council throughout all stages of the purchase and what future costs are envisaged in using consultants?
- Whether he can give a categorical assurance that the trusts relating to the properties which are currently registered in Jersey will be transferred to the mainland and when will this commence.

COUNCILLOR PETER NUTTING the Leader and **COUNCILLOR STEVE CHARMLEY** Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support will reply:

- *The arrangements which have been put in place to ensure that there is adequate governance, high quality management and rigorous scrutiny of business strategy, plans and performance.*

Through the process of acquisition the decision was taken to acquire the beneficial interest in the shopping centres through the purchase of the units in the existing trusts. Therefore the Council has taken on the existing structure and governance through a Jersey Property Unit Trust. Through robust procurement from a central government framework a national and well respected property and asset manager has been appointed by the Trust to take on the ongoing management of the assets. This ownership structure of the centres has been successful in the past and has been mirrored to start the Council's tenure. The property manager Montagu Evans, one of the national top 10 managers of shopping centres and who currently manage 40 shopping centres nationwide, have been appointed by the trustees on the recommendation of the Council.

The Council's internal and strategic governance has been developed following a significant process of due diligence involving meetings with other Council's with similar asset holdings, internal and external workshops, risk management sessions together with professional advice from a number of different organisations.

The short to medium term management of the centres will be covered by a detailed business plan which will be agreed with the Council. This will set out the plans for the future success of the centres and will be regularly reviewed, reported on and updated annually.

- *What estimates have been envisaged for repairs, maintenance and refurbishment of the shopping centres?*

Refurbishment costs in addition to the usual maintenance costs have been considered in detail during the due diligence process and are covered by the Planned Maintenance Programme. The costs are recovered through the service charge; allowances have been made for the following areas: Mid Level and Pride Hill with a continued refurbishment programme, together with capital expenditure associated with tenant fit out across a number of specific units. Detailed financial information on allowances is confidential at this time as it is commercially sensitive.

- *Are there any contingency plans for dealing with the impact of any further decline in traditional retail trading?*

The Council are currently considering a long term plan to combine Pride Hill and Darwin with a mixed use development at Riverside. This links to the wider Economic Growth Strategy and Shrewsbury Big Town plan. Through a combined control of items such as town branding and identity; car parking (quality, pricing etc); public realm; a greater range of non-retail uses (potentially a leisure attraction and residential development) then the Council strongly believes that the Pride Hill and Darwin have a long term future within the town.

It is predicted that Darwin will become the focus of future mid-market and aspirational retail. Primark, and the mid mall refurbishment are key to this.

The role of Pride Hill is different. The Upper level works well and can be further enhanced and Wilkos moving into the lower level will be a catalyst for change in that area. We will be focusing on improving mid level and looking at uses, not simply retail.

Riverside will be a catalyst of creating an urban development form that is aligned to the character of Shrewsbury with a development that connects to the River.

- *What have been the total costs of the use of consultants in providing information, advice and acting on behalf of the Council throughout all stages of the purchase and what future costs are envisaged in using consultants?*

The total expenditure for consultants who have been engaged to support the acquisition process, including specialist property and asset advisors, specialist legal advisors and specialist financial advisors is currently forecast to be £544,000 which is within the amount approved by cabinet to support the acquisition process.

Although the appointments have been made, The Trusts are currently in the process of finalising the contracts for property management and asset management services and therefore the total amounts can be confirmed in due course but are within the financial modelling which took place to support the acquisition process.

- *Whether he can give a categorical assurance that the trusts relating to the properties which are currently registered in Jersey will be transferred to the mainland and when will this commence.*

The Council has not yet made any formal decision on transferring the assets back to the mainland although that is the intention. This option is currently being considered in detail and a report will be brought to a future cabinet and council meeting for decision.

QUESTION 6

COUNCILLOR ANDY BODDINGTON will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

What analysis has the Council made of the impact the China import ban on recyclables will have on Shropshire's recycling rates?

COUNCILLOR ROBERT MACEY the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services will reply:

The full impact of the Chinese restrictions isn't clear yet and will not be for a few months. However, the current methods and markets used by Veolia provide significant mitigation against any negative impacts on the recycling of plastics and the other major waste streams.

Most of the material collected for recycling by Veolia is re-processed in the UK. The main issue raised by import restrictions in China is that of plastics, where there will probably be much stricter controls on the quality of material they accept rather than an outright ban.

The plastics collected by Veolia in Shropshire go through a first stage sorting process at a Materials Recovery Facility near Wolverhampton. This is to separate them from the glass and cans and remove obvious contaminants. The remaining material is then sent to a dedicated plastics sorting facility in London where it is separated into specific polymers before it is sold on to plastics recycling companies which can be anywhere in the world.

Although we don't yet know the full details of the Chinese import restrictions or of any knock-on impacts to other markets, this two stage sorting helps to keep the quality high which increases the value and the saleability of the material. Veolia have also been opening up other markets for the plastic across the world in order to limit any negative impacts of a contracting market in China.
