

**MEMBER QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION 1**

**COUNCILLOR ROGER EVANS** will ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport

'I note the number of comments being received reference potholes in the county and the many problems these are incurring for both residents and visitors.

Can we be told please:

- How many potholes were reported in each of the last four months. That is in January, February, March and April 2018.
- How many potholes were reported in each of these months during 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- How many potholes have been repaired in each of the months listed above, and how many have needed repeat visits.
- How many claims for compensation have the council received in each of the months listed above.
- How many of the claims in each of the months listed above have resulted in actual compensation being paid out.
- How many claims in total have resulted in compensation being paid out in each of the last three financial years and what has been the total cash paid out in each of these years'.

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

**The Response is To Follow**

**QUESTION 2**

**COUNCILLOR KEVIN PARDY** will ask the following question to the Leader of Council.

'With reference to the purchase of the town centre's shopping I have carried out research on a number of businesses, not all of them are associated to Shrewsbury town centre but all have or do carry out business within the town boundaries. In doing so I have discovered the following, alarming facts:

Toys 'R' Us - Closed

Ann Summers - Closed.

New Look - To close men's outlet.

Maplin - To close.

House of Fraser - Under threat of closure

Marks and Spencer's - To close 100 underperforming stores and downscaling of 200 new Simply Food stores to 36.

My research did not cover all major outlets but was just a snapshot of outlets.

Why is Shropshire Unitary Council and in particular Councillor Nutting risking Shropshire people's money at a time when national retail outlets are struggling, failing and withdrawing from town centre malls in preference for out of town retail parks and online retail?'

**COUNCILLOR PETER NUTTING** the Leader of Council will reply:

Dealing firstly with the specific retailers that are referred to and the circumstances with which the closures have occurred or are under threat of occurring and where known, the current position of Shrewsbury stores.

Toys R Us - The business has gone into administration following failure to restructure their corporate debt.

New Look - The business has gone into a Company Voluntary Agreement (CVA) on a structured basis. The principle ladies wear unit in Pride Hill centre continues to trade. New Look menswear was a new operation which has not succeeded and consequently all branches have been closed.

Maplin - Fell into administration. The business cited issues linked to the fall in the pound and a withdrawal of credit insurance making it difficult for this business to raise capital.

House of Fraser - Reports are those reported in the media which are that the company are seeking a Company Voluntary Agreement and to restructure its store portfolio but this is unlikely to be known fully until June. House of Fraser was acquired by Sanpower in April 2014. Sanpower are a significant company with 120 billion of assets, but their plans for House of Fraser have been unclear with many historic long-term leases on stores which are oversized. They have therefore been trapped and unable to adjust their floor areas and their lease terms. There is no indication of the Shrewsbury store closing at this current time. The view of various firms of accountants is that of the 59 store portfolio, 30 will be retained.

Marks and Spencer's - M&S has actually only listed 15 full line stores that it plans to close. We have been informed by M&S's advisor that Shrewsbury trades well and that there are no plans to close or downsize the town centre store. The announcement about M&S Simply Food was that they would now only open 36 new stores instead of 200 planned ones. There are currently 636 Food Stores in the UK.

Turning to the question concerning Shropshire Council's acquisition of the Shopping Centres in Shrewsbury. The purchase of Shrewsbury's main shopping centres will support the economic growth and regeneration of Shrewsbury town centre. It will support the development of Shrewsbury as a 'destination', help provide an improved and attractive retail and leisure offer, and secure employment for Shropshire residents both directly and indirectly.

The Council believes that it has a really important role to play in helping to shape the future sustainability of the town. This is particularly important given the changing retail environment and the ability to have control of the shopping centre assets to deliver change for the benefit of the locality and the wider Council area.