

COUNCIL 13 DECEMBER 2018

MEMBER QUESTIONS REPORT

1. Question from Councillor Tony Parsons:

“I understand that it has been confirmed today that an additional circa £7M has been provided from central government for the repair of potholes in the County and that this resource must be used before the end of our financial year.

This is welcome news as there is much still to be done. Emphasis has often been placed on repairs which benefit the car owner, but the many cyclists in the county have largely been forgotten. Cyclists generally cycle along the edges of our roads where the surfaces are at their worst. Indeed, many of our cycle ways are in a poor state of repair, often rutted and uneven. Will any of the additional funding be used to bring up to a better standard the cycle ways in our County. Cycling is a positive factor on the health and wellbeing of our community and the impact on health of not providing facilities which encourage this will be detrimental in both the short and long term.”

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport:

Shropshire Council has recently received £7,313,000 (capital funding) from the Department of Transport (DfT) to improve the highways network. An extensive briefing note on the DfT award to Shropshire Council has been circulated to all Members, which provides the intent for the funding highway improvements, particularly on rural roads. This funding will be used to augment the highway improvements identified in both the existing capital programme and the 2019/2020 / 2021 capital programme. These improvements will benefit all users, including cyclists. Footpaths and cycleway are defined as part of the highway network, and improvements to footpaths and the edge of carriageways will be identified and improved in line with our Asset Management Strategy which defines how we invest in highway infrastructure.

For completeness the next Local Transport Plan for Shropshire (LTP4) is currently being developed and as part of this the County's priorities for highways and transport are being established following engagement with key stakeholders. It is envisaged that a full public consultation on the draft document will take place in mid-2019, and these (when endorsed and approved) will prioritise investment decisions for the new 7 – 10 years.

2. Question from Councillor Pam Moseley:

In November, the Health & Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report from the Director of Public Health, in which he, with reluctance, proposes a further £2 million cut to the Council's public health services, on top of the £2 million cut announced only in September. The £4 million cuts are to assist the Council in meeting the financial pressures of rising costs in adult and children's

social care, and to help deliver a balanced budget.

The non mandated services to be ceased or reduced include smoking cessation - including for pregnant women, falls prevention, mental health promotion including suicide prevention, weight management programmes, early identification of conditions such as diabetes/pre-diabetes and atrial fibrillation, and PHSE and related health promotion in schools.

All of these services can improve the health and wellbeing of Shropshire residents in the medium and long term, and also save both the local authority and the NHS money, by reducing the incidence of serious and chronic conditions, and the need for social care. This is particularly pertinent in Shropshire with its older and ageing population. Extremely unusually, in recognition of the potential adverse impact of the cuts, the Director of Public Health concludes his report by saying "I cannot commend this report to the committee."

In view of the proposed cuts, the expected loss of the government's public health grant in April 2020 and the concerns of the Director of Public Health, can the Portfolio Holder advise how the Council will be able to continue to deliver effective public health services in the future, particularly in light of the impact of the Tory government's austerity policy on the Council's overall financial position, and the increasing need for assistance from the Council as the further withdrawal of preventative measures takes effect on the health of Shropshire residents?

Response

As members are aware, along with other rural local authorities, Shropshire Council receives a significantly lower of funding for all its responsibilities compared to its urban counterparts. Alongside this factor Shropshire Council faces a growing challenge of increasing demand for support for local people needing various forms of social care. This demand has risen at a greater rate than many areas due to our older population profile and our rurality. We have also seen a significant rise in the number of children who need to be "Looked After" by the Local Authority. It is as a result of these significant pressures that every department within Shropshire Council, including Public Health is being asked to identify additional savings to enable the local authority to set a legal budget for 2019/2020.

Our focus in developing any savings proposals has been to ensure that the council meets its statutory responsibilities and considers programmes where we have some discretion to reduce, suspend or discontinue services in order to meet our financial responsibilities. Given the many statutory or mandated responsibilities that the Public Health Directorate has there are only a limited number of areas that we can achieve the savings required in order to set a legal budget for next year. It is therefore with reluctance that the Director of Public Health and I have put forward the proposals that have been discussed with the members of the Health and Adult Social Care Oversight and Scrutiny Committee.

As some of these savings are part of the Public Health Grant that the Local Authority receives we are required to assure Public Health England that it is spent on areas that will maintain or improve the health and wellbeing of our population. Given the

vulnerability of people requiring social care or children being brought into the care system, we have been in discussion with the Regional Director of Public Health England regarding the proposals that we are developing. Preventing individuals from needing social care is clearly an area of great need within our community, as well as stretching our hard-pressed resources. Shropshire is fortunate that thanks to the efforts that have been made we have one of the healthiest communities in the country. It is with that in mind that we are trying to meet the various demands on our resources to target those areas of need that require greater attention at this time.

Members will be aware that Elected Members and Officers continue to lobby for fairer funding for the people of Shropshire. Indeed I have been lobbying Ministers on this subject on a regular basis and will continue to do so. I welcome the stance that HASC members have taken to support a cross party approach to lobby for fairer funding for the people that all of us serve and look forward to working with them to achieve our shared goal of making Shropshire the healthiest community in the country.

3. **Question from Councillor Jane MacKenzie:**

Re Youth justice - In Shropshire, when a young person under 18 pleads guilty to their first offence in court, they are often given a referral order rather than a custodial sentence.

These referral orders are written together with the young person to help them move on from this first offence and make better choices. The contract will include any aspects/support that it is felt the young person will benefit from whilst on the order.

Almost all contracts will include a number of hours of voluntary service, which is called reparation. The reason for this is to allow that young person to give their time back to their local community and learn new skills.

However, the only provision for young people in the whole of Shropshire and Telford where they can carry out their reparation is at a workshop in Oakengates where they make wooden items which are sold and the money raised given to charity.

Whilst this is ideal for some young people it isn't for most. It also means that young people are forced to travel to Oakengates from all over Shropshire with the ongoing costs and difficulties in organising transport.

If we are truly committed to supporting our young people to improve their life chances and avoid reoffending, why are there no local projects, schemes or similar where young people could more usefully pay back within their own local communities and learn new skills which are relevant to their future employment prospects?

Response

To summarise the - Member's question, they have asked about the suitability and variety of Reparation in the Shropshire and Telford area indicating that the workshop in Oakengates is the only placement and that this may be inadequate in supporting

changes in lifestyle, skill development and future employability as well as being difficult to access due to transport difficulties.

Firstly to clarify 'Reparation' is one aspect of a Restorative Justice (RJ) approach. RJ and Reparation are part of all orders a young person is subject to whilst they are with the West Mercia Youth Justice Service (WMYJS) rather than just an element of Referral Orders.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) defines Restorative Justice (RJ) as "the process that brings those harmed by crime, and those responsible for the harm, into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward". This requires direct or indirect communication between the victim and the person who committed the offence. It should meet both of their wishes, not just one or the other.

The most appropriate approach for an individual victim, once they know the options and potential benefits, is the one they want. In addition to a face-to-face meeting this may, for example, include direct or indirect reparation that satisfies the victim's specific request, shuttle mediation between the parties, which may include answers to questions, or receipt of a written explanation or apology.

Therefore 'Direct Reparation' are activities carried out between the victim and the offender, or at victim's request, and may take many different forms to try to repair the harm caused. This is recognised as the most effective form of Reparation for both the victim and the offender and has high satisfaction rating for both parties.

Indirect Reparation are activities delivered without any input or communication with the victim and could take many forms but should be for the benefit of the local community. The workshop at Oakengates is in this category and is currently the only 'placement' for indirect Reparation in Shropshire and Telford.

Young people from Shropshire, who are not resident in children homes, are usually transported to and from their sessions at the workshop by YJS staff. Care staff normally transport those young people who are resident in children homes.

At the workshop young people complete a design project for the object they wish to make, learn practical skills in how to make the object, learn to listen and to follow instruction, learn health and safety requirements, enhance their social skills by selling the items they have made to the general public. Funds raised are used to support local charities.

The use of the Workshop for all Indirect Reparation work in Shropshire and Telford has been recognised as limiting and this is being addressed in the service's Reparation Development Plan. West Mercia Youth Justice Management Board received a presentation on reparation and discussed and agreed the development plan at their meeting held in July.

New community-based placement are currently being sought and there are currently two possibilities under discussion but these are yet to be finalised.

On Monday 26th November 2018 the management oversight of reparation has been passed to the new centralised services Team Manager within WMYJS and the limited reparation opportunities in Shropshire has been highlighted, as part of the handover process, as a priority action to be addressed.

4. **Question from Councillor Andy Boddington:**

Re Community Led Housing Fund - In December 2016, the now MHCLG allocated Shropshire Council £580,296 under the Community Housing Fund. How has the council used this money?

Response

The Council has allocated this funding for the following Community Led Housing activities:

We have committed capital of **£250,000.00**

This grant funding is currently supporting the development of 19 local needs homes on 2 Community led housing schemes. The first scheme is delivering 12 new build homes to Passive Haus standard and the second scheme is delivering 7 homes as part of a conversion of a local landmark derelict chapel, that will include a community meeting space, which has been shortlisted in the National Housing Award finals for 2018. Both these schemes will be delivered in 2018.

We have a further 5 potential schemes underway and continued low level grant funding is vital to help pump prime delivery.

Revenue support for community groups (professional fees, incorporation costs).

We have committed revenue of **£183,200.00**

We have created a full time Community Led Housing Enabling Officer (CLHEO) post to actively engage with our communities, particularly our rural communities and help develop community housing groups and projects. They attend parish meetings and organise community consultation events. Many of these communities and areas have not had development for generations and the CLHEO is working externally and internally with our planning policy colleagues to develop a bespoke range of policies that positively encourages housing of all tenures, brought forward by these communities. This post is funded for 3 yrs.

The Council has helped fund housing needs surveys and consultation events for a number of Parish/Communities interested in bringing forward community led schemes. The Council also supports in partnership with the Shropshire Housing Group the Marches Community Land Trust Services (MCLTS). This consultancy service works to deliver homes in partnership with local communities and ensures a genuine collaboration between a community and the housing provider. Both the Council and MCLTS, actively encourage and welcome any other sustainable model of delivery.

“Right Home Right Place”. The Council has launched a comprehensive IT & web based survey ([www. righthomerightplace.com](http://www.righthomerightplace.com)) to encourage residents of Shropshire

to tell us what type of housing they need and where they need it. This may be people living with parents but wanting their own place, older people looking to downsize, or someone looking for a house to be nearer their employment, or businesses needing housing so they can recruit workers. Once we have that housing need evidence, we will work in partnership with those communities to see what housing we can help to deliver.

Establishment of regional/local enabling hubs.

Shropshire is the largest inland Local Authority in England, covering nearly 1250 sq miles which is predominantly rural, with areas that are deeply rural. We have held 2 community led housing events (North and South of county) to engage with a wide range of industry professional, voluntary and in particular community representatives to showcase current examples and propagate the learning and community benefits of such schemes. Each event has been very well received and numerous leads for further schemes received by our Enabling and Development Officers and our Community Led Housing Officer who are in the daily process of helping to bring forward these opportunities.

- Housing units directly supported with capital grant = 19
- Community-led housebuilding projects set up = 2. A further 5 embryonic schemes in discussion for a potential 74 homes.
- Support hubs established = Currently supporting the established MCLTS.
- Local authority staff directly employed = 1

We have allocated most of the DCLG funding, but it is not yet all committed or spent, as the development of a community led scheme can take months if not years to come to fruition. As the interest in Community Led Housing tangibly grows and the success of schemes completed is propagated more widely, so does the consequential demand for funding. We hope sincerely that the MHCLG will continue to support Shropshire in growing community led housing development.

5. Question from Councillor Andy Boddington:

Re Civil Enforcement:

- a) In 2017/18, how much did the Civil Enforcement Service cost Shropshire Council to operate?
- b) What was the total income from penalty charge notices during that period?
- c) What is the breakdown of number of PCNs issued by market town across the county?
- d) How many fixed penalties were issued for littering and where in the county were these issued?

Response

- a) The overall cost of operating 'Parking Enforcement', which has already been reported in the 2017/18 Annual Parking Report, was **£586,334**. This includes the direct costs of employing the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) and the wider indirect corporate costs associated with the Parking Enforcement function,

together with the direct and indirect costs incurred by the penalty charge notice processing function.

There is no single separately managed 'Civil Enforcement Service'. Parking Enforcement forms an integral part of the Investigations, Compliance and Intervention Team, which is managed as part of the wider Trading Standards and Licensing Service. There is no single budget from which the costs can be directly determined.

The role that CEOs undertake is generally referred to as 'Parking Enforcement'. This enables customer recognition of the primary CEO role and function. However, it is not the only role that they undertake. They also collect cash from parking machines and undertake parking machine maintenance/ticket replenishment, together with other enforcement functions that relate to matters such as Blue Badge fraud and using or leaving a vehicle in the Square in Shrewsbury. These other enforcement functions are criminal matters and are not controlled under the civil regime.

It is the intention of the Trading Standards and Licensing Service to undertake further work to more accurately identify the core Parking Enforcement costs for the 2018/19 Annual Parking Report.

- b) The total income from PCNs, which has already been reported in the 2017/18 Annual Parking Report, was **£437,584**.
- c) The following are considered to be the 'market towns'; however, there was also a total of 54 PCNs issued in other areas.

Market Town	Number of PCNs
Bridgnorth	2,485
Church Stretton	150
Ellesmere	303
Ludlow	1,722
Market Drayton	537
Much Wenlock	75
Oswestry	1,203
Shifnal	148
Shrewsbury	6,560
Wem	193
Whitchurch	281

- d) A total of 3 fixed penalty notices (FPNs) were issued; 1 in Ludlow and 2 in Shrewsbury.

A total of 10 incidents of littering were dealt with in 3 areas of the county.

Location	Number	Outcome
Bridgnorth	1	Written Warning
Ludlow	1	Written Warning

Ludlow	1	FPN
Shrewsbury	5	Written Warning
Shrewsbury	2	FPN

The CEOs do not have responsibility for dealing with littering. This is the responsibility of Environmental Maintenance. Where CEOs observe littering taking place, they report such matters and these are referred for further assessment/investigation by an authorised officer. CEOs do not issue FPNs.

Littering and other environmental crimes are not civil matters and anyone identified as littering commits a criminal offence. Whilst a FPN can be issued for a littering offence, these are not the same as PCNs. A defendant can choose to pay a FPN as a means of discharging their liability to the original offence; however, if they choose not to pay then the Council must decide if it will institute legal proceedings in a court of law. A PCN, unlike a FPN, can be challenged and if the challenge is unsuccessful or payment is not made, this becomes a civil debt.

6. **Question from Councillor Jane MacKenzie**

Re: Housing and planning

In April this year I held a public forum together with Shrewsbury Civic Society called “Shrewsbury Growing Forward’. It provided an opportunity for the public to air their views about housing development in and around Shrewsbury and to contribute their ideas.

We were packed out, with over 100 people attending, and one of the main outcomes was that residents wanted developers to raise their game and build to a higher quality standard.

They called for houses that were more energy efficient, and for housing developments with real connectivity into existing local communities.

They wanted a strategy to encourage pedestrians and cyclists by giving them improved provision with green highways connecting housing developments with the town centre.

They wanted more affordable housing.

However, the single most important priority, was that developers and their agents, at the earliest stage, should be encouraged to raise their game, by being provided with an set of locally agreed quality building standards. They would be expected to meet, or exceed, these standards if they wanted to build in Shropshire. We called it the Shropshire Standard.

Please will the portfolio holder tell me whether he agrees with this proposal, and whether he will work with members, the Civic Society, developers, planning officers and residents to develop a set of building quality standards for Shropshire?

Response

Councillor Mackenzie raises some important points about the qualitative aspects of new housing development which are increasingly of interest to our communities across the county. In this there is the issue around the type provided, does it meet the needs of key workers, entry level housing, those on low incomes, those looking to downsize or the housing needs of an ageing population? I have been working with Officers and Members to develop an understanding and policy approach that works best for the Shropshire context.

The “Right Home Right Place” (see link) initiative was established specifically by the Council to identify more specifically housing need across the County and provide information about affordable and community housing for those interested. In addition, while our policies to deliver affordable housing across the County have performed well we will be revising these as part of the Local Plan review process so that they are better tailored to present circumstances.

<https://www.righthomerightplace.co.uk/about/>

Our Planning Service has also been developing ways of raising awareness about design quality issues in the broadest sense and we have two initiatives that support this.

The first is the Council’s annual design and heritage award scheme will be held for the second time early in 2019. The award scheme seeks to acknowledge and promote best practice across a range of categories including the repair and adaptation of historic buildings, domestic house extensions, commercial development as well as larger housing schemes and masterplans. In this best practice is both highlighted and recognised.

The second initiative is an accreditation checklist which is currently being finalised, the idea here is to lead best practice in housing design by assessing schemes at a pre-application stage against a number of factors against which a successful scheme will be assessed. The aim is that accredited schemes will include factors such as those raised by Councillor Mackenzie. I would add that the accreditation checklist at this stage is intended to lead behaviour change positively, it is not policy but a process developers will be encouraged to opt into during pre-application discussions. I would hope then that accreditation becomes a marketing tool for developers who are then able to say their scheme meets the “Shropshire Test”

7. Question from Councillor Jane MacKenzie

Re Culture and Tourism.

Tourism is the second second biggest employer in Shropshire, after the NHS. Tourism provides over 14 thousand jobs across Shropshire and the net benefit to the local economy is valued at over 250 million pounds. Everyone agrees that an

expansion of tourism and the visitor economy is vital for the future economic growth and prosperity for Shropshire.

Given all this, why is there no Tourism Strategy for Shropshire, or a dedicated Tourism officer employed to co-ordinate and promote this key industry?

Response

“We recognise that the visitor economy is a vital part of the Shropshire economy accounting for over 14,000 jobs, which is circa 7.5% of all employment. We are currently working with a range of private sector partners to revitalise our collective approach to this important sector and also looking to reallocate existing resources from within the Place Directorate to provide more capacity and support in this area.

Recent key decisions such as the Great Outdoors Strategy and Big Town Plan refer to the exceptional quality of the experience we offer to tourists and visitors to the County. There are many businesses, groups and organisations across the County that work incredibly hard to ensure that we, not just maintain this quality of experience and of place, but improve it year on year. I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank them all for the excellent work they do. I am happy to confirm that we are looking to work with partners to develop a new strategy for Tourism and the Visitor Economy during 2019.”

8. Question from Councillor Jane MacKenzie

Re Public Health / Health and Social Care

According to the Chief Medical Officer for England, only 6% of people with alcohol dependence access treatment each year *

This leaves us with the shocking fact that 94 % of people do not get the help they need to turn their lives around.

This matters to us here in Shropshire because according to Shropshire’s own Alcohol Strategy, alcohol is a factor in over two thirds of our violent crime, over a third of domestic violence and a fifth of rapes. There has been a 100% increase in the number of people attending A&E with alcohol poisoning and alcohol is the second biggest preventable cause for cancer after smoking.

Alcohol is the main cause of death in men aged 25 -45

Given the massive impact the alcohol dependence has on individuals, their families our communities and the NHS, please can you comment on Shropshire’s current provision for individuals in our communities with alcohol dependence, and let us know what the budget is for drug and alcohol services in the coming year, and how this compares with the previous two years?

* Strang, J., Drummond, C., McNeill, A., Lader, M. and Marsden, J., (2014) Addictions, dependence and substance abuse. In: Davies, S Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2013: Public Mental Health priorities: investing in the evidence. [Online] Available

from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/351629/Annual_report_2013_1.pdf [Accessed 19 November 2014].

Response

Budget

Current PH allocation for Shropshire is £38 per head of population per year. The national average is £58 per head

Drug and Alcohol Budget

Drug and Alcohol Budget 2019 – 2020 = £2,973,530 estimated based on 2018/2019

Drug and Alcohol Budget 2018 -2019 = £3,333,570

Drug and Alcohol Budget 2017- 2018 = £3,394,980

Drug and Alcohol Budget 2016 – 2017 = £3,514,130

This includes all aspects of service and council staff salaries.

Shropshire Local Service Provision

The current contract for drug and alcohol services provides treatment and support to people who have concerns about their own or others alcohol consumption. Delivery is currently focused within the main community facilities in Oswestry, Ludlow, and Shrewsbury with outlying service delivery in Market Drayton, Whitchurch and Church Stretton.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Crown House Shrewsbury	All day	All day Late clinic alternate Tuesday 1pm – 6pm	All day	All day	All day
Castle View Oswestry	Afternoon only			All day 1 st Thursday late clinic 1pm – 6pm	
Bridgnorth			All day alternate weeks		
Ludlow			All day alternate weeks		
Whitchurch			2 nd Wednesday every month All day		
Shared Care (drug clinics)	Haughmond View		Market Drayton (moving to Tuesday (in new year)	Alternate Thursday's Ellesmere and Albrighton	

Alcohol Clinics	Marden (appointments only)	Market Drayton GP surgery	Beech Tree Caxton pm (Alternate)		
		Severnfields (appointment only)	Cambrian pm (Alternate)		

The service also provides alcohol liaison nurse service in Shrewsbury Hospital, their role is to reduce the number of bed days people with alcohol dependency spend in hospital and stop admissions for alcohol detox only.

Other services include inpatient assisted withdrawal, community assisted withdrawal, BBV screening and vaccinations, needle exchange and recovery support.

In 2017 -2018 there were 539 bed days saved and 35 admissions stopped by the ALN service in Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

Current needs

The latest prevalence rate for people with alcohol dependency in 2016-2017 is estimated as 2792.

The latest data available on met need, based on prevalence rates and numbers in treatment, found Shropshire to be above the national average rate of meeting need (2016/2017 met need was 21% compared to 18% nationally). There is no current data on met need.

Since these figures were published the numbers of people presenting to alcohol treatment nationally have dropped by 19% overall between 2013 to 2014 and 2016 to 2017.

Shropshire has seen a greater reduction in presentations with a 38% fall in the same period.

Public Health England have undertaken an inquiry into the fall in numbers of people in alcohol treatment. The inquiry included a deep dive involved 14 local authority areas, 9 where they had seen a fall in presentations to treatment and 5 where there had been an increase between the period of inquiry. The deep dive included a number of stakeholder interviews. Shropshire was part of the deep dive.

Main findings from Inquiry

The main findings from the inquiry into the 14 authorities involved were:

- Financial Pressures
- Service reconfiguration affecting alcohol service users more than other groups (40 of the 69 areas had moved to an integrated service)

- In most areas where there had been a fall in numbers, some stakeholders felt that service reconfiguration and reduced capacity had generated some unintended consequences including:
 - a loss of focus on the specific needs of alcohol users
 - a prioritisation of limited resources on opioid substitute treatment
 - barriers to alcohol users approaching the service, including a perception that the service focused on the needs of drug users
 - barriers to alcohol users engaging in treatment after initial contact, including a lack of alcohol specific treatment pathways within integrated services and a loss of alcohol treatment expertise among staff
 - referral pathways and multi-agency working had become less effective

Stakeholders said that there were other factors which had contributed to the fall in numbers including:

- reduced capacity in wider local health and social care services, particularly in areas with high levels of socio-economic deprivation
- a national service provider being placed into formal administration in some areas
- poor data quality exaggerating the decrease in some areas
- the delivery of early or brief interventions preventing peoples' problems escalating to a point where they needed treatment for dependence

Locally identified issues for Shropshire:

- loss of clinics in GP services due to provider model, this is been slowly reinstated.
- loss of dedicated alcohol service. Feedback from service users state the difficulty of attending a building commonly known as a drug service.
- reduction in budget
- Public Health grant is reducing alongside savings the Council are having to make.

Treatment Outcomes for Shropshire

JSNA 2016 -2017 (latest figures) for the Public health Outcomes Framework 2.15 successful completions and non representations

32% of people left alcohol treatment successfully compared to 40% nationally.

6% of people left opiate treatment successfully compared to 6.7% nationally

32% of people left non-opiate treatment successfully compared to 37% nationally.

9. Question from Councillor Roger Evans

As per the motion debated and agreed unanimously at the Council meeting in September, Shropshire Council has an important role in supporting communities across the county. Many spoke about the role of the Community Enablement Officers in supporting the diverse communities across the county and especially their role in supporting our Parish & Town Councils.

Under present proposals, made since the motion was debated and unanimously agreed by all councillors in September Council, this work will cease to be carried out from April. Many Parish & Town Councils have expressed dismay at the prospect of this happening. Many have written to the Council expressing their dismay at this taking place. Elected members are also concerned at this loss and do not understand who or how this work is to be carried out in the future.

For the avoidance of doubt, I and many others value this work and want it to continue. Can the Cabinet member responsible confirm why this work is now considered to be not needed, unimportant and cease.

Response

The existing Community Enablement Team (12 members of staff) are indeed being formally consulted with and have been placed at risk of redundancy, and this process follows a previous Council decision to address wider council funding pressures, which are all well-rehearsed. It is the case that x 6 new full time equivalent Place Plan Officer posts have been created in the Economic Growth team. These are new roles which will ensure a key focus on the development and delivery of Place Plans and closer alignment of these to all things CIL, the Local Plan and our wider strategies and plans.

Place Planning is the key means by which we work with Town and Parish Councils to discuss, understand and agree our respective issues and priorities and key investment and delivery priorities across a number of competing priorities and agendas (development, infrastructure, demographic impact etc.) and these posts will be key in giving that process the capacity and focus it deserves. Members of the current CET team have been encouraged to apply for these new posts and interviews will be undertaken prior to the Christmas break.

In addition, these new roles will be important in working with T&PC's and other partners and stakeholders, for example to help identify housing needs we are looking to address with our emerging local housing company.

Thus, a new way forward which is repurposed to ensure that the process of identifying and selecting community priorities and their links to wider agendas, plans and ultimately seeing those outcomes to fruition is delivered, which by its nature will require working with Elected Local Members, Town and Parish Councillors and Clerks across a number of issues and agendas.

10. Question from Councillor Roger Evans

At a number of recent meetings, the subject of Community Infrastructure Levy has been brought up by both elected members and Parish Councils. This concerns how the money at present sitting in the council's bank accounts is to be allocated and spent.

Several proposed schemes submitted by Parish Councils have been refused. A number of others are being prepared in order to spend the collected money in the area where the houses have been built.

CIL and its use was discussed in 2010 during the many public meetings held then and in the immediate years leading up to the adoption of the SAMDev Policy. It was stated quite categorically, by both elected members and officers then employed by Shropshire Council, that if settlements agreed to have extra housing under the SAMDev policy then the extra money collected in CIL payments would enable them to put in infrastructure improvements to their area. This money would include both the “Neighbourhood Fund” and the “Local Fund”. The former could be spent on any local project, the latter to be spent on previously agreed priority areas in the settlement where the development took place.

Can the Cabinet member inform Council when this agreed policy, a policy agreed by Council was changed?

Response

The last amendments to Shropshire Council’s Community Infrastructure Levy arrangements were agreed by Cabinet on 29 July 2015. This was not a change to the way in which CIL funds are spent, but a clarification of a position that had been held since the adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy in 2011. At the meeting on 29 July 2015 Cabinet confirmed that, as per the 2011 position, priority be given to using CIL Local funds:

‘to deliver appropriate critical infrastructure, or infrastructure required in order to fulfil the Council’s statutory functions. The types of infrastructure the CIL funds can be used are placed into three categories: Critical, Priority, and Key. The category of an infrastructure item is defined in the Place Plans, which are reviewed on an annual basis. Critical infrastructure is defined in the Core Strategy as necessary to ensure adequate provision of essential utilities, facilities (such as education places and health provision), water management and safe access, and are therefore higher priority items.’

No amendments have since been made to our approach to CIL, and we are therefore continuing with the prioritisation of infrastructure provision as set out in Core Strategy Policy CS9 in 2011. Any changes to CIL policy would be subject to consultation – including with all T&PCs and all Elected Members – and would have to go through the appropriate Shropshire Council decision-making process. Council officers, in close partnership with a Working Group of T&PC representatives and with an Elected Members Task and Finish Group, will be developing proposals to go out to consult on CIL policy in 2019. We will be providing further information on this process in due course.