

**CABINET 4 MARCH 2020**  
**MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

**1. Question from Councillor Roger Evans**

I have not seen the notes re the call in for the Youth Strategy decision made at the last Cabinet meeting held a short time ago so having to rely on my notes and personal memory.

Mine and some others present at that Scrutiny meeting understood you to undertake that any Youth Club at present receiving funding from SC would continue to receive it if that club was unable to obtain replacement funding from either their Local Council or some other voluntary body until next March. This to allow more time for them, together with SC, to work together in an effort to locate and obtain any replacement funding needed so it can continue to stay open.

Last night at a meeting of a Youth Club in my area I was told that Youth Clubs in Market Drayton funded by Shropshire Council will be closed, cease to run from 31 March 2020.

This will mean that notice of closure will have to be given to all attending these two clubs next Wednesday, 4 weeks' time. This is because SC will be withdrawing all its financial support and Market Drayton TC have said it is unable to help and replace the funding previously provided by SC. Is SC now going to stop providing financial help and therefore cause these two clubs to close.

My understanding is that MD Town Council will continue to support the Youth Zone on Fairfield Estate and note this club is also in receipt of funding from elsewhere. This club is independent of the 2 youth clubs commissioned by Shropshire Council.

Therefore currently  
SC contract SYA to deliver 2 clubs  
MDTC is supporting the Zone 1 club .

As I understand it therefor after 31.3.20

- MDTC will continue supporting the Zone 1 club and may in fact help it to open for a second session.
- The 2 youth club sessions held elsewhere in the town and funded by SC will cease from 31.3.2020.

Can an answer be given as to why, given the undertaking made, funding the 2 clubs in questions is being stopped and so causing them to close. As I understood it, what is happening at Market Drayton is directly contrary to the undertaking I and others understood was given at the Scrutiny Meeting.

Finally are there any Youth Clubs or Youth Sessions ceasing on March 31st 2020 due to lack of funding..

## **Response:**

The paper agreed at Cabinet was to adopt a phased approach to implement the full proposal throughout the next twelve month period from April 2020 – March 2021.

The recommendations agreed are outlined below:

### Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- a) Agree to cease the current commissioning model via the LJsCs.
- b) Agree a new model of Targeted Youth Support, which will be managed in-house as part of Shropshire's Children's Services Early Help provision. This model will be trialled, developed and implemented between April 2020 and March 2021.
- c) Agree that further work takes place between Shropshire Council officers and town and parish councils, to agree the commissioning of open access youth support/clubs.
- d) Whilst agreeing to a new model being fully implemented by April 2021, agree to a phased withdrawal of funding for universal open access between the period March 2020-March 2021, as new agreements are made with providers.
- e) Agree that Shropshire Council explore alternative models of support to the voluntary sector, currently delivering universal open access youth clubs; this would include DBS checks, training, implementation of appropriate policies and procedures and assistance to support future financial sustainability.
- f) Agree that as part of the new model, we will work with partners, including town and parish councils, to design and deliver a localised model of youth provision maximising the use of all available resources and funding to:
  - Work with local providers/partners and voluntary sector to support the delivery of open access youth clubs.
  - Target services towards those young people in most need of support including those who are vulnerable or most at risk.
  - Ensure qualified youth workers are in place across Shropshire, providing the skills and experience needed to make most difference.
  - Work to address emerging social issues and concerns such as youth violence and knife crime, county lines etc.
  - Provide a localised youth offer – ensuring there are workers on the ground able to reach young people within the community e.g. schools/colleges, on the streets.

- Build and strengthen the system of support available to meet the needs of young people by linking qualified youth workers to other services and specialist workers.
- Improve the use of information to understand impact and enable investment to build on success.

With reference to your query in relation to Market Drayton.

After recent discussions - I can confirm that Market Drayton Town Council, have agreed to fund open access youth provision in their area. Market Drayton Town Council want to implement their own local plan – to ensure open access youth provision is available to young people in the town. They do not have plans to reduce the number of sessions currently being provided. As part of their planning Market Drayton realise that there are efficiencies that can be made in moving provision to a venue they already use to deliver a youth café and existing open access youth session. The Town Council feel that this is a better use of resources (including buildings) and want to build on existing open access youth provision.

As the above recommendation describes – Shropshire Council will work closely with Town and Parish Councils to commission open access youth provision – as is the case with Market Drayton Town Council. And can confirm that no open access youth provision will be lost.

However, Town and Parish Councils have the discretion and their own decision making processes – to commission providers which they feel will offer provision that best suits their community's needs including children and young people.

## **2. Question from Councillor Roger Evans**

It is noted that Clive Wright relinquished the post of Chief Executive at Shropshire Council with immediate effect sometime on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February. An e-mail was sent around the staff informing them of this and that two other Senior Officers had been appointed as Joint Chief Executives with immediate to take over the running of the Shropshire Council.

This was totally unexpected and very sudden. During that morning Mr Wright was heard on Radio Shropshire giving details of the excellent emergency work that SC staff with him as lead were doing to help our local residents and businesses cope with the flooding problems being incurred. It was expected that he would be giving a further briefing later that day. Others were of course then drafted in at short notice to give it.

This departure was in the middle of the biggest crisis that has faced Shropshire Council since it was formed in 2009. Staff and volunteers were all being co-ordinated by a team of senior staff headed very ably by the Chief Executive. He was also in the process of investigating several other issues within the Authority. This leadership ceased with his sudden departure.

Can I and others concerned about this sudden departure please be told

- What merited the sudden departure of Mr Wright the former Chief Executive of Shropshire Council.
- Who officially agreed and appointed the two acting Chief Executives.
- When effectively are their appointment from.
- If needed were any official forms filled in, formally signed and witnessed. When was this carried out please.
- Are the two persons appointed to act as Joint Chief Executives to be given any enhancements in their pay whilst carrying out their new duties.
- Will the departure of Mr Wright be subject to any further action being taken by SC including the payment or otherwise of any monies.
- What plans and what process will be adopted in ensuring this post is permanently filled as soon as possible.
- Will any investigations being carried out by the former Chief Executive be continued.
- It is noted that no formal notice of change to council leadership was made the council meeting. Why was this please.

Shropshire Council are facing many unprecedented challenges. These include continuing problems caused by flooding, managing a budget which at present is only being delivered by making number of monetary cuts and ensuring the method of repairing our highways, including potholes, improve

**Responses:**

- What merited the sudden departure of Mr Wright the former Chief Executive of Shropshire Council.

**Response:**

It was a mutually agreed decision between Mr Wright and the Leader of the Council

- Who officially agreed and appointed the two acting Chief Executives.

**Response:**

The Leader of the Council on an interim basis until a new Chief Executive can be formally appointed

- When effectively are their appointment from.

**Response:**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February

- If needed were any official forms filled in, formally signed and witnessed. When was this carried out please.

**Response:**

No forms are required

- Are the two persons appointed to act as Joint Chief Executives to be given any enhancements in their pay whilst carrying out their new duties.

**Response:**

Discussions are on-going and need to be finalised

- Will the departure of Mr Wright be subject to any further action being taken by SC including the payment or otherwise of any monies.

**Response:**

It would not be appropriate to respond to this question as to do so will involve the disclosure of confidential information.

- What plans and what process will be adopted in ensuring this post is permanently filled as soon as possible.

**Response:**

The timeline will be agreed next week

- Will any investigations being carried out by the former Chief Executive be continued.

**Response:**

The former Chief Executive was involved in a number of such matters and these will continue to be progressed appropriately on a case by case basis.

- It is noted that no formal notice of change to council leadership was made the council meeting. Why was this please.

**Response:**

The Council agenda had already been published at the time when Mr Wright left. Any permanent appointment will be subject to Council approval.