

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	
<p>In response to my question on 15 June in which I stated:</p> <p>‘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?’</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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’.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
RESPONSE	
<p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	

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.