



Committee and Date

Cabinet

6 April 2022

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2022

In the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall

10.30 am - 12.15 pm

Responsible Officer: Amanda Holyoak

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Present

Councillor Lezley Picton (Chairman)

Councillors Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll, Rob Gittins, Kirstie Hurst-Knight, Simon Jones, Cecilia Motley, Ian Nellins and Ed Potter

32 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

33 Disclosable Interests

None were declared.

34 Minutes of the Last Meeting

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

35 Public Question Time

A public question was received from Mike Streetly in connection to the planning application process and expected construction start and opening dates of the North West Relief Road.

The full question and response provided is available from the web page for the meeting: [Public Qs and responses 23 March 22.pdf \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](#)

37 Member Question Time

Member questions were received from the following:

Urgent question

Councillor David Vasmer had submitted an urgent question – in relation to price of fuel and cost of living, now exacerbated by the situation in Ukraine, and what the Council could do to help those who would be forced to cut spending on heating and food to a point where it would affect their health.

The Leader recognised the urgency of the situation and pressures faced from rising prices for fuel, food or heating, particularly in a county where wages were lower than the average and as a sparsely populated rural county. The Council could offer help in a number of ways such as through housing benefit or council tax support scheme. She also referred to the broad range of community groups and organisations that could provide support, help and advice. A comprehensive listing of support available from the council and partners was being pulled together and would be publicised as soon as possible. The Shropshire Covid Recovery Social Impact Task Force - Cost of Living had been re-established and would bring a range of stakeholders together to share their knowledge of the impact on people in Shropshire and the support available to them. This information would be shared with all members as soon as possible. The full question and response can be heard on the recording of the meeting available from : [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 23rd March, 2022, 10.30 am – Shropshire Council](#)

Councillor Julian Dean – in relation to the gender pay gap at Shropshire Council

In response to a supplementary question, it was agreed to provide Councillor Dean with further information on the profile of gender roles at different levels throughout the Council.

Councillor Tom Biggins, also on behalf of Councillors Gerald Dakin and Peggy Mullock – in relation to a new swimming pool in Whitchurch.

Councillor Rosemary Dartnall – in relation to bus service provision and the Bus Service Improvement Plan. Responding to a supplementary question from Councillor Dartnall, the Leader confirmed that the Council was making a contribution to services until results of the BSIP was known and that the bid had been strongly supported by all local MPs

Councillor Tony Parsons – in relation to the update to the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and capacity, stiffer penalties for rogue landlords and capacity within the private housing enforcement team.

Councillor Caroline Bagnall – in relation to the responses to the draft Library Strategy consultation and plans for staffing and self-service machines and opening hours. In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Bagnall, the Portfolio Holder reported that library staff would remain on the front line and many were keen to expand their roles and facilitate libraries being used in as many ways as possible.

Councillor David Vasmer in relation to welcoming refugees in Shropshire. In response to Councillor Vasmer's supplementary question regarding publication of contact details, the Leader said that government guidance was being updated on a daily basis and the front page of the Council's website displayed links to details of the support being offered both nationally and locally.

38 Scrutiny Items

There were no scrutiny items.

39 Shropshire Library Strategy

In introducing the report, Councillor Cecilia Motley, the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure, Tourism and Transport drew attention to the huge asset the libraries represented at the heart of Shropshire communities and the need to make the best use of them. She drew attention to the need for them to be as accessible as possible, to all sections of the community, and to the opportunity to use them as community hubs, also supporting tourism in the county.

She reported that staff were willing to change the ways in which they worked in order to enhance this role. In response to comments that the changes represented staff cuts and were threat to community libraries, Councillor Motley reiterated that the consultation would be tailored to each library as what worked in one location might not necessarily in another. Other Portfolio Holders reported on flourishing community libraries. The Leader also referred to the need to recognise the dramatic change in use of libraries both before and during the pandemic. Addressing concerns raised about self-service machines, the Portfolio Holder explained that they would reduce the workload of front line staff which would allow them to develop their role, and increase interaction with customers providing a range of services.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agree the Draft Library Strategy and appendices being published for public consultation in March 2022.

40 Update to Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy

Councillor Simon Jones – Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health, introduced the report and referred to newly extended powers of the Council to permit civil penalties to be imposed, as an alternative to prosecution, specifically in relation to electrical safety standards up to 30k and minimum energy efficiency levels up to 5k of private rented domestic property. The current Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy has been updated to incorporate the additional civil penalty powers and a draft produced for consultation.

Questions and comments were raised in relation to capacity to enforce both this policy and others, eg planning enforcement; identification of the numbers of properties with EPC ratings F and G, and linking this work to the Cost of Living Task Force and Shropshire Plan and Economic Strategy. The Leader said she would ensure this issue was included in the work of the Cost of Living Task Force. A written response would be provided in relation to Councillor Dean in relation to the EPC ratings. She reported that capacity had been increased both in this area and also planning enforcement.

RESOLVED:

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves for consultation, with any necessary amendments, the draft updated Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy as set out at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 That Cabinet instructs the Head of Business and Consumer Protection to undertake a six-week period of consultation and to bring the draft updated Private Rented Sector Housing Enforcement Policy, together with all feedback received from the consultation, back to Cabinet for further consideration and final approval.

41 Shropshire Enhanced Bus Partnership Scheme

Councillor Cecilia Motley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism and Transport presented the report providing the background to the recommendations within it.

James Willocks, Passenger Transport Group Manager, was invited to respond to a number of questions raised on a 'plan B' if the BSIP bid was unsuccessful, and also in relation to recently announced changes to and withdrawal of Arriva bus routes and reliability of services. He explained that extensive planning had taken place to address a number of different scenarios depending on the extent of success or otherwise of the bid. Once the outcome was known further consultation could take place with the public to determine priorities if necessary. He explained that the services being cut or withdrawn by Arriva

had been assessed by the Council and support was being provided for those where there was no alternative, and that it would be possible to provide a figure on the costs of this. It would also be possible to revisit that support if requested.

The Leader confirmed that Arriva had been asked to confirm that usage figures utilised in their decision making had not been based on those during the pandemic period and that she would be happy for decisions on support to bus routes to be revisited.

RESOLVED

- 1.1. To approve the formation of the Shropshire Enhanced Bus Partnership Scheme, as laid out in Appendix A
- 1.2 To note that the establishment of this initial scheme will not place any additional financial burden upon the bus operators or the Council, until the outcome of the Shropshire Bus Service Improvement Plan bid has been made known, at the time of writing this report the outcome of that bid is expected at the end of February 2022

42 Crowmeole Lane Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Controlled Bus Gate

Councillor Ian Nellins, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Natural Assets and the Green Economy introduced the report asking Cabinet for endorsement of a permanent point closure on Crowmeole Lane following the expiry of the Experimental Traffic Regulations Order (ETRO) on 18 September 2022. The proposals were welcomed.

RESOLVED:

- 3.1. To agree:
 1. The proposal to implement a permanent point closure on Crowmeole Lane following the expiry of the current ETRO on 18 September 2022
 2. Seek to enforce moving traffic contraventions under the newly introduced Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provision) Regulations 2022 when in force and subject to the Secretary of State making an Order.
 3. To procure the supply of camera enforcement technology hardware and software capabilities and back-office support for administration of the proposed point closure (including review of contraventions and

Parking Contravention Notice (PCN) progression) to a third-party provider.

4. That any revenue collected from the proposed point closure in excess of the ongoing running costs is ring-fenced to fund future active travel activities.
5. The monitoring and evaluation of vehicle contraventions as well as pedestrians and cyclist on Crowmeole Lane to inform future learning and application to wider or future schemes, projects or initiatives across Shropshire.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: