

COUNCIL 7 JULY 2022

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1 Question from Bob Saunders

Why are pedestrians only allowed a few seconds to cross at traffic lights at the Welsh Bridge and crossing Smithfield Road by the Station in Shrewsbury? In many other parts of the country Councils have re-timed traffic lights to allow reasonable time for pedestrians providing a more equitable balance between those who wish to walk and those who drive. Re-timing traffic lights would be a simple, low-cost way to encourage more active travel as well as making it safer for pedestrians.

Response from Councillor Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure

All pedestrian crossing timings in Shropshire are calculated in accordance with the national guidance contained within the Department for Transport document, Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 6, and therefore allow reasonable time for pedestrians to cross safely. Whilst it may appear that they only have a few seconds (the green man shown to pedestrians is short and typically only 4-6 seconds in length), it is important to remember that the green man period is only intended to act as an invitation for pedestrians to cross and therefore is not in place for the full duration of the crossing (to minimise delay to traffic). Pedestrian safety beyond the initial green man period is achieved with the use on-crossing above ground detectors which will hold traffic on red until all crossing movements have been completed, subject to a maximum timing which is calculated in accordance with national guidance (using a walking speed of 1.2m/s).

2 Question from Tina Teearu

It is now 3 years since this Council acknowledged the imperative need to cut down on carbon emissions in Shropshire by declaring a Climate Emergency. Working with Zero Carbon Shropshire you made a good start, but 3 years on, I am concerned that the Council has not entirely understood the gravity of the situation that we as humanity, find ourselves in. The recent IPCC report (which is based on many years of scientific research) makes it absolutely clear that humans are causing the Climate Emergency by burning fossil fuels to provide energy. We are seeing the early effects of this global temperature rise right here in Shropshire with the more frequent incidence of flooding. If we do not keep the rise below 1.5 degrees of pre-industrial levels we lose any hope of retaining a liveable planet for future generations. Please think about that for a moment. Shropshire must do much more to decarbonise, and do it much more quickly than it is currently doing. "Business as Usual" is no longer an option. We must adopt a more sustainable way of life immediately. My question is: Can the Council not see that there is a simple solution to instantly save 135 years' worth of carbon costs and millions of pounds of tax

payers' money? Cancel the NWRR. Why are you not embracing this opportunity?

Response from Councillor Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure

The proposal to deliver the NWRR has been carefully reviewed in the light of the Council's stated carbon position. A rigorous modelling and forecasting exercise, both for the construction phase and the future lifetime use of the scheme has been undertaken and published on the Council's website. Further to this, the methodology and conclusions within the report have been independently reviewed by an academic specialist at Birmingham University. The findings of the report highlight a net carbon legacy for the scheme in the region of 24k tonnes over the lifetime of the scheme. This impact has already been considerably mitigated through informed design choices (build materials and methodology), and the acknowledgement of net carbon savings on the highways network more widely within Shrewsbury. In order to reduce this legacy still further, and potential to a net zero balance, Shropshire Council is now exploring a range of innovative carbon in, and off, setting opportunities within the proximity of the new road and Shropshire more widely. The cost and nature of these measures, along with the final carbon account for the road, will be collated within the Full Business Case. This is expected by December 2022 and will be considered for endorsement by all Council Members in advance of its submission to DfT to release the required construction costs in full.

3 Question from Pamela Pink

Will you please explain what is happening to the Shropshire bus services. Elderly and disabled people dependent on the bus services across the county are finding that services are severely cut, much to their dismay. How are people to get to work on time? The Prime minister promised £31 billion pounds to improve services, particularly to help people in country areas. Why is this not happening? Why is the council neglecting its duty to the poor and needy. An elderly blind person in Oswestry today was in tears because she had to wait an hour for a bus to Shrewsbury, not knowing that services had been cut. This is not good enough.

Response from Councillor Cecilia Motley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure & Tourism and Transport

As you may be aware, Arriva recently announced that due to a reduction in the numbers of passengers they needed to either amend a number of bus services or, in some cases, withdraw entirely from them, with a number of these services being commercially operated and for which the Council has no control. To provide some stability to the network the Council has stepped in to provide some emergency support to ensure that services remain in place whilst we consider our options here, that doesn't mean our support then stops, it gives passengers some reassurance and also allows us to enter into discussions with Arriva and other providers and news on what will happen beyond this initial emergency funding will be announced shortly.

The £3.1 billion you refer to in your question was the original funding that was announced to realise the Government's ambitions within the National Bus Strategy and for which we submitted an ambitious plan to transform public transport in Shropshire, unfortunately, like many other rural authorities we were unsuccessful in our bid and this was in part due to the fact that the initial funding allocation of £3 billion was reduced to circa £1.2 billion.

We are continuing to press our case with funding to Government and will also be submitting a bid to transform public transport in Shropshire as part of the second round of Levelling Up funding announced by the Government.

4 Question from Stephen Mulloy

The Committee on Standards in Public Life is carrying out a review examining the role of leadership in embedding the Seven Principles of Public Life in public sector organisations.

The Seven Principles of Public Life are: Honesty, Objectivity, Openness, Selflessness, Integrity, Accountability and Leadership.

They want to hear how ethical standards are upheld within organisation and welcome examples of good practice from across the public sector. The deadline for submissions is 17:00 on Friday 29 July 2022 using the attached case study template.

Can I ask if the leader of Shropshire Council will be responding to this review, and if so, will she share her example(s) or experience of good practice in ethical standards with this meeting of Shropshire Full Council?

Response from the Leader, Councillor Lezley Picton

Thank you for your question.

I have referred this to the Chair of our Standards Committee, and he will consider, along with the Monitoring Officer, a suitable case study to submit to the Committee on Standards in Public Life by the deadline of 29th July.

5 Question from Darren Childs

I have learned that the crisis in ambulance response times is the 'tip of the iceberg', a symptom of a wider crisis in 'flow' across A&E, our acute hospitals in Shrewsbury and Telford, and in social care.

SaTH typically has in the region of 120 patients a day who are fit for discharge but cannot leave hospital. This contributes very substantially to a lack of availability of hospital beds, to the A&Es becoming full, and to ambulances off the road because they are queuing up outside A&Es at RSH and PRH.

Will Shropshire Council meet ICS leaders again to explore the possibility of joint funding and/or management of a cohort of staff who could be used flexibly to provide routine healthcare and social care to patients being discharged from hospital, filling the gaps until longer-term arrangements can be put in place?

Can discussion take place on direct employment of staff from a variety of companies across the care sectors to ensure pay and conditions that will support retention? There would of course be a cost – but considerably less than the health and social care system incurs now through failing to achieve timely discharge of patients from hospital.

If cost is an issue – and I suspect it will be, will the Council approach Shropshire's four MPs, and seek their support, as a matter of urgency, in approaching the Department of Health and Social Care and appropriate Ministers in an attempt to secure additional funding and also provide the public with updates?

Response from Councillor Simon Jones, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Shropshire Council's Adult Social Care discharge performance remains high with double the number of discharges compared to pre pandemic years. The numbers of people that are medically fit for discharge will include both Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin residents and a proportion of out of county in particular Powys residents. Our Integrated Care System (ICS) service is the council's County wide team, who offers a service to adults (aged 18 years or over) to safely discharge people from Hospital and maintain people safely in the community. ICS works alongside system partners to provide a range of approaches which support people to: -

- Avoid unnecessary hospital admissions (Rapid Avoidance, AA),
- Facilitate timely and safe hospital discharges
- Adopt a system reablement approach which results in better outcomes and avoids readmission into hospital.

During pressured times we review capacity, and our staff often volunteer to do additional hours to support the hospitals and have supported across 7 days a week

We implemented a number of initiatives to support increasing demand in the hospitals. One of our winter projects for example, led and supported by the Voluntary and Community services saw an increase of 60% in referrals based on the previous Winter 2020-21. They attended multi-disciplinary meetings and we are working to review this, to support flow more this upcoming winter.

We have continually moved resource to Frailty and A&E, to support front door discharges.

Our inhouse (START) Short Term Assessment and Reablement Team is Shropshire Council's inhouse domiciliary care provider which supports people to regain lost skills, learn new ones, and generally increase their ability and independence. They support on average 82 people with its primary focus on swift discharge from hospital. Reablement is a key focus for the system to

ensure people have better outcomes and avoid readmission into hospital. The service is available from 8am to 10pm 365 days a year, including Bank Holidays.

The Rapid Response aims to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and safely support people in their own home. This a joint partnership between Shropshire Community Health Trust and Shropshire Council. Nurses, care coordinators and support workers, across both organisations work together to ensure a seamless service that provides a rapid assessment, treatment and care program of support to stabilise and support people during an acute episode of ill health

We are currently involved in a number of transformation plans across the system which is a positive platform to improve the patient journey and outcomes in the future.

There are currently pooled resources in Joint Commissioning through the Better Care Fund (BCF); we are awaiting further guidance on this for 2022/23, this pooled budget is focussed on both supporting discharges and prevention, and this is likely to be the continued themes for 2022/23.

We are working with the Shropshire in care partners (SPIC) to look at recruitment and retention and have done recruitment fayres to support the wider system, we have offered incentive payments to the market to support hospital discharge and block contracts.

We hope this provides reassurance that partners are continually looking working together to focus on system transformation and ways we can align resources and support, this includes working on plans so support demand and capacity modelling to enable us to align resources where they are needed the most and prevent admissions as well as supporting swift discharge.

6 Question from Kris Welch

Following an FOI request, I have been told that Shropshire Council is legally responsible for the Shropshire County Pension Fund as its Administering Authority.

Does Shropshire Council acknowledge that it has legal responsibility for the Shropshire County Pension Fund?

Is Shropshire Council concerned that the fund's continued investment in fossil fuel companies could open it up to a future legal challenge from Shropshire residents or fund members who are concerned about the fund's failure to divest from companies whose businesses are incompatible with the Paris Agreement and therefore is Shropshire Council planning to take any steps to protect itself from any potential legal action along these lines?

Response from the Leader, Councillor Lezley Picton

Shropshire Council is the Administering Authority for the Shropshire County Pension Fund and delegates all decisions relating to the Pension Fund to the Pension Committee.

The Shropshire Council Pension Fund (“the Fund”) is a part of the Local Government Pension Scheme which is established under the Superannuation Act 1972 and regulated by a series of Regulations made under the 1972 Act. Further to Regulation 53 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 Shropshire Council is the “administering authority” for the Fund. It is the role of the Administering Authority to “maintain a pension fund” for the Scheme and Regulation 53 states that “ An administering authority is responsible for managing and administering the Scheme in relation to any person for which it is the appropriate administering authority under these Regulations”.

Under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016 the Secretary of State has the power to intervene in the investment function of an administering authority if the administering authority does not have regard to the Regulations, guidance or if other concerns are raised. This may include changing the Investment Strategy Statement and, in the extreme circumstances, the transfer of investment powers to the Secretary of State or another nominated person.