

CABINET – 15 FEBRUARY 2023

MEMBER QUESTIONS

Cllr Alex Wagner

Unnecessary and shabby street furniture in Shrewsbury Town Centre

Shrewsbury Town Centre is a fantastic place, full to the brim with heritage and history. Despite this, the streets often seem cluttered with unnecessary and often shabby street furniture and signage. Several residents have gotten in touch to complain about the poor quality of signage on the Wyle Cop in particular, with black poles seemingly just used as boards to post largely unuseful information. Another similar example can be found in the number of ugly, brightly-coloured signs signalling parking restrictions around Claremont Bank and Welsh Bridge – five of these signs are within around 10 metres of one another near St Austin’s Street car park.

In the interests of preserving the heritage of our Town Centre and creating a friendlier street scene, would Shropshire Council commit to reviewing their existing street furniture, cleaning up their shabbier signage, and considering adopting new policies on the visual impact of signage?

Cllr Rob Wilson

At the Place Overview Committee on Monday 6th February 2023 it was clarified that development of the new Local Transport Plan, LTP4, stopped in March 2022. At the meeting the Executive Director of Place said that the new LTP will be a “transformational change from LTP3, it is a shift away from planning for vehicles into planning for places and people”. The new plan has to be in place by Spring 2024. LTP3 was published in Spring 2011.

Is the Council’s decision making on transport still based on LTP3? Are there interim measures in place to bridge the transformational gap between LTP3 and LTP4?

Cllr Rosemary Dartnall

Clarification is required to some contradictory answers to previous streetlight questions. It was stated there were 7.25% faults in 20,000 lights, equating to 1,450 faulty lamps. Supplementary information, 4/2/23 stated 306 total current faults including 240 (80%) overdue. Probably long overdue, given the number of lights in my division out of action for 10, even 12 months: there are 11 within a 250m radius. How many Shropshire lights are currently faulty and how many of these exceed the 28-day repair target? Why are such long-standing repairs left for many months on end?

The press release about LED installations/lighting improvement is as welcome as it is ambitious. Telford and Wrekin Council came first among local authorities in the National Highways Satisfaction Survey, 2022 rated 7% above average, with a 2-day repair target. Yet in all street light categories Shropshire Council was ~5% below the average. T&W have replaced 95% of their 24,400 lights with LED since 2018, delivering financial and CO₂ emissions savings. Clearly T&W have a geographical advantage, but does this alone explain why it has taken 10 years to update just 30% of Shropshire lighting to LED?

Can the portfolio holder please explain why this service has become so poor, why the decline was not noticed and rectified earlier? Is he certain that the performance indicators and other monitoring of the Kier contract is fit for purpose? Is he satisfied there is an effective working relationship between Highways officers, WSP and Kier staff concerned with streetlighting?

Cllr Julia Buckley

This week's delayed annual agreement on the Cost of Care is a critical decision for Shropshire Care providers. In particular those non-profit providers who cannot cross-subsidise their activities such as supporting disabled adults.

Can the cabinet member confirm that this year's uplift will cover the 6.6% increase in the minimum wage as well as other inflationary cost increases? As a legal requirement for employers and in a sector with chronically under-paid staff, it is essential that our commissioned providers are enabled to pay social care staff an appropriate wage to work with dignity.

Furthermore, what mechanisms can we put in place to ring fence contractual uplifts to ensure it reaches the staff affected?