

## COUNCIL 14 DECEMBER 2023

### MEMBER QUESTIONS

#### **Question from Councillor Duncan Kerr**

As you know we have just had the International day for the Elimination of violence against women and public sector organisations are becoming much more aware of the harm done by domestic abuse in particular and I would like to thank you for your actions in marking this day. In the light of this can you tell the Council in what proportion of cases of children being made subject of a Child Protection Plan domestic abuse was a significant contributing parental factor for the last 3 years. If the IRO do not record this data can I ask why this is the case since without data we cannot identify trends and develop effective intervention strategies.”

#### **Response from Councillor Kirstie Hurst-Knight, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education**

As you know we have just had the International day for the Elimination of violence against women and public sector organisations are becoming much more aware of the harm done by domestic abuse in particular and I would like to thank you for your actions in marking this day. In the light of this can you tell the Council in what proportion of cases of children being made subject of a Child Protection Plan domestic abuse was a significant contributing parental factor for the last 3 years. If the IRO do not record this data can I ask why this is the case since without data we cannot identify trends and develop effective intervention strategies.”

Domestic Abuse is picked up and recorded at various points:-

**Domestic Abuse Triage** – multi disciplinary daily meeting that looks at ALL domestic abuse incidents within the previous 24 hr period as notified by the police, these can be at level 1,2,3 or 4. Triage recognises is a child is already open to a social worker. All of these notifications are sent to relevant schools on a daily basis through Operation Encompass. Not all of these will be opened to Childrens Social Care, and levels 1,2,3 will go to the Early Help Support Team for intervention with parents and or the Domestic Abuse Early Help Worker.

**Domestic Abuse Triage Activity since April 2023 to 6/12/2023**

<b>DV Cont acts</b>	<b>QTR1</b>			<b>QTR2</b>			<b>QTR3</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>APRIL</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUNE</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>AUG</b>	<b>SEP</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>	
<u>LVL1</u>	294	322	368	343	384	342	319	271	21	<b>2664</b>
<u>LVL2</u>	11	51	35	23	72	32	55	79	12	<b>370</b>
<u>LVL3</u>	19	51	40	41	40	33	52	32	7	<b>315</b>
<u>LVL4</u>	24	33	27	15	37	13	17	16	8	<b>190</b>
<u>SW</u> (open to)	141	177	160	202	162	160	137	115	27	<b>1281</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>4820</b>

Once a referral is received about a child and it is opened either because of a Domestic Abuse Incident or there is knowledge of Domestic Abuse this will mean a Domestic Abuse risk is recorded. This does not always mean that Domestic Abuse is the reason for the referral or the reason for intervention.

Domestic Abuse is recorded as a risk factor at various points in the referral, assessment and planning for a child. It can be recorded as the reason for referral, or may become a factor as a families history becomes known, or as information is shared, or an incident happens and is reported.

The Independent Reviewing Officer are not responsible for recording this data, this would be far too late in the process. The data is recorded at the point of information being shared.

The reasons for a child being on a Child Protection Plan are determined in law and they are Neglect or Physical, or Sexual or Emotional abuse / harm. Domestic Abuse is recorded as a risk factor but a child will be on a plan for either Emotional or Physical Harm, depending on nature of the Domestic Abuse experienced. The Domestic Abuse Act recognises children as being a victim in their own right.

From a total of **1,022** Child Protection Plans starting between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the children subject to these plans who have domestic abuse flags on either referral or SWA . The reason for going to Child Protection Conference may or may not be Domestic Abuse, but there is evidence that Domestic Abuse has been experienced.

Please note that these flags show where DA has been identified as a risk factor at any point either before or after the CP start date.

<b>Of 724 CLA as at 4th December 2023:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
DV flag from either Referral or SWA, or both	555	77%

<b>Of 650 CLA starting 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
DV flag from either Referral or SWA, or both	454	70%

<b>Of 1,022 CP starting 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
DV flag from either Referral or SWA, or both	733	72%

What is clear from the data is that a significant majority of children who have longer term intervention with children's social care have experience of some level of Domestic Abuse.

### **Question from Councillor Ruth Houghton**

Does the Council have a time frame for the implementation of mitigation measures that will address the environmental issues in the River Clun and its catchment area? This is vital in order to facilitate the building of new homes that are affordable for local people.

### **Response from Councillor Ian Nellins, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Transport and Councillor Chris Schofield, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services**

Shropshire Council commissioned a River Clun Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Mitigation Measures Study in 2021 and published this in April 2022. It considered the impact from phosphates arising from residential development in the river Clun catchment and was aimed at progressing work on mitigation measures to help unlock the current position with Natural England and facilitate development. However, subsequent NE advice then confirmed that nitrates from new housing would also affect the River Clun SAC. Thus, a nitrates budget would also be needed for all proposed residential development in the catchment, along with a review of the mitigation solutions identified for phosphates to assess which would also mitigate nitrates. As a result, the Council commissioned an addendum to the original mitigation study in early 2023. This assessed the potential for nutrient neutrality mitigation measures. We have now received this work in draft and are working to finalise with a view to publishing.

Whilst the Council believes this further work helps set out the mitigation measures needed to address environmental issues, Natural England (NE) have reviewed the draft and indicated that without the completion of a Restoration Plan for the Clun catchment their position remains unchanged. We are awaiting a letter from Natural England to confirm this position and clarify any further actions the Council can take. At present, Natural England does not have a defined programme for the completion of a Restoration Plan and without this in place it makes it hard for the Council to progress mitigation. This is because Natural England's position is that mitigation measures for development must not be the same as those measures needed to restore the River Clun SAC to a favourable conservation status (restoration measures). We therefore need the Restoration Plan to define the restoration measures to understand what we can bring forward as mitigation.

We are continuing to work with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water. The issue remains as a topic in the Examination in Public (EiP) of the Draft Local Plan. The EiP has heard representations on the HRA for the Plan so far and the Council is awaiting a date for hearing sessions to examine the draft policies and site allocations.

### **Question from Councillor Julian Dean**

I am concerned about the efficient use of very limited resources for supporting safer streets and making walking, wheeling and cycling more attractive options as modes of travel. As examples; in July 2021 Shrewsbury's weekend High Street transport filtering was agreed for continuation 'until a further report has been considered by Cabinet [for] longer term arrangements'; Shrewsbury's New Street one-way scheme has gone through repeated temporary orders despite agreement that a permanent scheme should be brought forward; the 20mph zone for Porthill/Copthorne has seen several design iterations without a final scheme reaching the public for consultation despite Cabinet approval in June 2022. What proportion of the allocated grant funds for active travel - allocated as a direct result of the pandemic, or granted by Active Travel England since then – has been spent on consultancy design or associated fees? What proportion of the funds has been spent on managing temporary measures? How many of the schemes that have received in principle council or cabinet support have been implemented as a permanent scheme? Does the portfolio holder consider the spending queried above to have been cost efficient?

### **Response from Councillor Dan Morris Portfolio Holder for Highways**

Shropshire Council has invested significantly over the past three years to improve our active travel provision, this includes the development of the 7 LCWIPs for Shrewsbury, Oswestry/Gobowen, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Church Stretton, Market Drayton and Whitchurch. These are expected to be adopted this financial year. Also 6 school streets enforced with newly acquired moving traffic offence powers and a number of successful grants for active travel schemes such as the one along Bank Farm Road are being planned. In addition to this we have redesigned the school safety team bringing the work in house with the new team being appointed to support the delivery of sustainable travel in schools, with plans to expand to support business and residential areas over the coming years.

I accept that some of the schemes have taken longer than others to be permanently implemented such as the New Street and 20mps zones. Further to discussions between Cllr Dean and officers they explained the reasonings for these delays and these are as follows; The first experimental order for New Street was for a contraflow cycle route, after the 18month period it became clear through conversations with Active Travel England and colleagues this was not safe or appropriate, therefore rather than remove a scheme which residents supported, the Council decided to implemented a new experimental order to deliver a 20mph zone with a segregated cycle lane, as this was supported by residents and assessed as a safe option. Officers have progressed with the next stage of making the changes permanent, and once the designs are completed the engineering changes needed will be delivered. As the work is being funded through Active Travel England, they are required to approve all designs. The 20mph zones have now been designed, however the initial design standards applied meant that the costs of implementing the schemes exceeded the total grant funding received from Active Travel England. As both New Street and the two 20mph zones are to be funded through

Active Travel England Fund 2, we have since asked for a lower specification to be drawn up to allow us to fund all projects if possible.

With regard to costs, I can confirm that Shropshire Council spends £115,000 annually on retaining its Active Travel support, and approx. £36,000 has been spent since the pandemic started on temporary measures on New Street. Of the money received in Active Travel Fund 2 the council have spent approx. £42,000 on the Frankwell 20mph zone, approx. £41,000 on the Low Traffic Neighbourhood in Copthorne (that was not supported by residents and therefore not implemented), £30,000 allocated on the feasibility and concept design work for Phase 1 of the Oswestry Cycle Network, and approx. £37,000 allocated on the designs and investigatory works for New Street.