

CABINET – 13 December 2023
MEMBER QUESTIONS

Question from:	David Vasmer	
Subject:	Street Lighting	
Portfolio Holder:	Ian Nellins	Approved
<p>We all support the idea that more people should be walking and cycling to and from work but there is a problem with some routes into town because they are only part lit. This means that people who need to start work very early in the morning or leave work late at night are discouraged from walking or cycling.</p> <p>When part time lighting was introduced, certain roads and paths were exempt and allowed to stay on from dawn to dusk.</p> <p>However there is no exemption for popular pedestrian and cycle routes such as the one between Corinthian Drive and Underdale Road.</p> <p>Would the portfolio holder for the Climate Change, Environment and Transport, reconsider exemptions to part time lighting to encourage more people to travel to and from work and consult with all members where these exemptions might be appropriate?</p> <p>Part-night lighting of certain Street lights was policy led with Members approval. If any changes to the criteria (i.e. switch on/off times of lights) would like to be reconsidered, this would generally require Directors approval to review and Members approval to change.</p> <p>However a review of lighting requirements is a key consideration of each intervention (i.e. scheme) contained within the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Exemptions to part time lighting, as a measure to encourage more people to travel to and from work, will be included as part of each review and in the Plan.</p>		

Question from:	Ruth Houghton	
Subject:	Road Safety	
Portfolio Holder:	Dan Morris	Approved
<p>Norbury School is a small primary school and nursery in South Shropshire located on a busy 60mph road with limited off road parking, a short stretch of narrow pavement and a discretionary 30mph speed limit. Due to the rural location most pupils travel by car or mini bus to the school. The local Parish Council with the support of a neighbouring land owner, are investing in the development of some additional off road parking, subject to planning approval. Whilst this provides some help towards addressing the parking problem it does not address the ongoing road safety issues.</p>		

Shropshire have recently been allocated £153m by Central Government (Shrewsbury and Atcham MP, Shropshire star 22.11.23) to fix pot holes and undertake other Highway improvements.

Will the portfolio Holder confirm that some of this funding allocation will be allocated to prioritising the implementation of a 20mph mandatory speed limit outside Norbury school and to improving the pavement and pedestrian access to the school?

Norbury School has been identified in the 20mph school zone project, however I cannot confirm when the speed limit will be implemented. Norbury school is in the first batch of schools where we are planning to engage with before April 2024. It is important to note that a formal consultation will take place on the project and if supported, officers will implement the reduced speed limit scheme next financial year.

You are correct that there has been additional funding allocated to Shropshire Council for potholes and highway improvements. Officers are working on the allocation of these additional funds to understand the criteria and therefore cannot confirm this will be allocated to a scheme in Norbury.

Question from:	Joyce Barrow	
Subject:	Innovation Park Oswestry	
Portfolio Holder:	Mark T Jones	Approved

Can you update me on the progress being made on the Innovation Park in Oswestry?

When will the infrastructure be in place?

What interest has there been from businesses? and what will be the benefits to the town economically, and how many jobs are predicted to be created.

What are we doing to promote the site and the benefits of having a business in Oswestry.

Preparations for the Innovation Park are in full swing, covering designs for roads, walking and cycling paths, and incoming utilities. The infrastructure works are expected to begin in spring 2024, bringing forward serviced employment land plots by early 2025. Unlike the initially planned phased approach, the entire site's infrastructure will be developed, allowing for the disposal of all plots.

Currently, negotiations are underway for the pre-sale of three plots. This unique proposition lets the purchaser acquire all three plots together, resulting in a shorter spine road, cost savings on construction, and increased revenue for the Council.

Interest in plots and inquiries are being logged, with the rest of the plots set to hit the open market once infrastructure contracts are finalized. An agent is in place to promote plot sales and lead negotiations with potential developers.

Local businesses, both existing and those looking to relocate, are showing interest, along with investors eyeing an Electric Vehicle Charging Hub on the site.

Council studies confirm a significant demand for grow-on space and highlight the shortage of employment floor space in Oswestry. The site is allocated for various

business uses, and the Council is adopting a flexible approach to development based on market demand.

A socio-economic study emphasizes the strategic importance of the Innovation Park, predicting the creation of jobs, a boost to the local economy, and increased confidence in the area for further regeneration. Additionally, the construction phase is seen as an opportunity to support locals with training, apprenticeships, and other education and skills opportunities.

Question from:	Nick Bardsley	
Subject:	NWRR – tress affected by the development	
Portfolio Holder:	Dan Morris	Approved

I welcome the Council's decision to progress the development of the first local authority owned Pyrolysis facility in the UK. Given that Shropshire is the second largest generator of renewable energy nationally clearly we are at the forefront of the UK climate adaptation agenda and forging a path for other councils to follow. Preparing the county's critical infrastructure to be fit for the future and be a sustainable competitive green economy, requires bold leadership and decision making.

I, like the majority of Councillors welcome the government's confidence in Shropshire and in particular the recent announcement in relation to fully funding the North West Relief Road.

I recognise that opinions differ and I respect the sincerely held views of those who take a different view to mine.

However I am disturbed at the misinformation being peddled by a vocal minority, especially that one of the trees affected by the development has anything at all to do with Charles Darwin. To the best of my belief this is nonsense. Can the Portfolio holder clarify the matter and also outline what plans the council has to plant and replace trees as part of our wider programmes?

Council Officers have confirmed that there is no known or recorded connection between Charles Darwin and the tree cited in current statements made by some lobby groups, since although it is on the same side of the river as the house where he grew up, it is within private land, and Charles Darwin as a child was reportedly a boarder at Shrewsbury School some miles away from around 9 years of age until his mid-teens.

On the matter of the unavoidable loss of 9 Veteran trees in particular, the council see this as extremely regrettable, but the undertaking to plant 84 new trees to replace these in particular, which will in time may then also reach veteran status with appropriate and submitted management plans, shows the commitment the council has to care and stewardship of the natural environment.

This focus on the management of the veteran tree issue is just a small part of a much wider planting legacy that will also see a ratio of 9:1 achieved in terms of other tree replacement around the NWRR.

plus we have an adopted corporate commitment to plant 345,000 trees (one for every resident) by 2030.

For clarity also, In fact Shropshire is the largest producer of renewable energy in the West Midlands and amongst our immediate neighbours, and also generates the 5th largest amount of solar energy in the UK, based on the latest Government data.

Question from:	Julian Dean	
Subject:	NWRR	
Portfolio Holder:	Dan Morris	Approved

Cabinet members will be aware of the levels of concern regarding the veteran trees that are due to be removed should the North West Relief Road go ahead on it's planned route. Given that planning conditions are not yet agreed, that the full business case is not yet drafted or agreed by council, and that DfT funding is not yet secured, can the portfolio holder assure the public that no works will be carried out that might damage the longevity of the veteran trees unless and until all these conditions are met

I can assure Members and the public that the Council, as applicant for the North West Relief Road, will properly implement the decisions taken at the planning committee and will fully abide by all Planning Conditions, once these are approved by the Northern Planning Committee in due course. Where these are defined as "pre-commencement conditions", all such conditions on the applicant will be discharged before the main construction works period. Conditions are not drafted by the Applicant, rather the Local Planning Authority, and as such the Planning Authority will also monitor and verify their discharge in advance of the main works.