

Question from Kate Butler

Shropshire Council announced a Climate Emergency in 2019 and aims for the Council to become carbon net-neutral by 2030. Can the Council provide their justification of the Carbon impact of the planned demolition of Shirehall to then build a new Civic Hub in the Riverside development? It is well established within the Built Environment that the retrofitting and the reuse of an existing building is more carbon effective than demolition and new build - how does this align with their 2030 net-neutral strategy?

Response from Councillor Ian Nellins, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

To be really clear – Shirehall has a massive carbon footprint and costs the council in excess of £1.3m per annum to keep open. A large part of the at cost related to outdated and inefficient heating and lighting systems and the building fabric is thermally inefficient as are many 1960's buildings on that ilk. Also the ongoing life cycle cost for investment in the buildings fabric has been detailed in previous reports to Council on this issue. We see our proposals as being consistent with our Climate declaration.

Question from Patricia Kapalo

As a 78 year old resident of Shrewsbury I have had some excellent support from Age Concern over the last few months and years. Their advisors and volunteers have really helped me with some difficulties, as well as understanding the new ways of accessing public services which are increasingly complicated. They provide a very valuable service for older people. I saw the Council has announced large scale cuts in its services for next year.

Can you explain whether these budget cuts will impact on grants to voluntary organisations in Shropshire?

Will the work of Age Concern be affected by a reduced grant from the Council?

I hope you will ensure some funding is retained to support older residents as we are still paying our Council tax every month and contributing to our county as valued members of the community.

Response from Councillor Cecilia Motley, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Thank you for taking the time to contact Shropshire Council and share your concerns in light of spending reductions that are regrettably required to ensure a balanced budget as published in our Medium Term Financial Strategy. Whilst the Local Authority is navigating a very challenging time, we'd like to reassure you that we remain fully committed to the health and wellbeing of our residents, and we will continue to prioritise investment in our local voluntary and community sector, thus maintaining the capacity of organisations such as Age UK. Aside from ensuring better outcomes for residents, this approach also ensures future cost savings by addressing issues at an earlier stage (avoiding crisis) or preventing them altogether.

Strategically we are working hard to protect, and ideally bolster the capacity of our voluntary and community sector in order to create communities that promote people's independence through access to support and activities that promote wellbeing, and also by building structures and systems that help residents to navigate to guidance and support at an earlier stage. This is part of our collective One Shropshire approach, where we are working with a range of key stakeholders across our health and care system to connect with our communities through offers designed to meet residents needs and improve their health and wellbeing.

We're grateful for your question and comments which further illustrates the importance of ensuring investment in this area is prioritised, and furthermore we're delighted to hear how this provision has supported you directly.

At Shropshire Council, we value hearing from and working with local residents about what they think is working well and where improvements could ideally be made within social care provision. If you'd like to become more involved in how Shropshire Council shapes its offer for residents, then please let us know and we can arrange to share more information about how to get involved.

Question from Victoria Moore

Page 162 of Appendix 3 of The Shropshire Council Financial Strategy 2024/25, there is an item regarding "Oteley Road, Shrewsbury Traffic Management improvements" with the detail being Traffic Flow Improvements and Road Safety on Oteley Road and an allocation of £1 million, funded from Developer Section 106 contributions.

What are these improvements and what is the cost of the various elements?

As Section 106 funds have been allocated to the Community Centre and children's playground, how much will be spent on each, where are the plans and when will construction begin?

The second Oteley Road Development Public Consultation describes 230 homes & 40% affordable but no social housing, which is the principal need.

It is unclear whether the Community Centre squeezed into a small quadrilateral adjacent to the A5, along with children's playground are the same structures already promised in the first Section 106 agreement.

There is very little available green space on the current development and this is proposed to be 'shared' with the proposed new development.

There is no current GP Surgery, pharmacy or school and no space for these.

All Active Travel routes on both the current and proposed developments are shared & one on the new proposal is a public right of way.

No bus provisions are mentioned, other than the current On-Demand, apart from a possible bus gate on the proposed new development.

How will Shropshire Council provide the necessary infrastructure of GP Surgery, Pharmacy, School(s), green space/leisure areas, public transport and Active Travel?

Response from Councillor Chris Schofield, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

- What precisely are these improvements and what is the cost of the various elements?

It is Shropshire Council intention to implement a highways improvement scheme along Oteley Road, which embraces the principles of the Shrewsbury South Sustainable Urban extension Masterplan document [shrewsbury-south-sue-masterplan-2013.pdf \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](http://shropshire.gov.uk/shrewsbury-south-sue-masterplan-2013.pdf) . The design is currently being developed by our consultants WSP, and works will be subject to further public engagement and costings in due course.

- What is the detail and costing of any Active Travel funding?

There is currently no Active Travel funding allocated to Oteley Road

- As Section 106 funds have also been allocated to the Community Centre and children's playground, how much will be spent on each, where are the plans and when will construction begin?

Section 106 funds have been collected from the SUE South development at Oteley Road to contribute to the development of a community centre. Across the whole SUE £400k of S106 funding has been collected. The preferred site for the community centre has been identified, but as yet there are no plans for this development and construction has not begun. £250,000 of the Community Infrastructure Levy from the schemes was ringfenced to develop the play facilities on the site.

- These community assets should not be delayed while deliberations occur about the second development site on Oteley Road. The second Oteley Road Development Public Consultation describes 230 homes & 40% affordable but no social housing, which is the principal need.

The proposed new development off Oteley Road is not currently subject to a formal planning application, the scale and housing need will be assessed as part of any future application.

- It is unclear whether the Community Centre squeezed into a small quadrilateral adjacent to the A5, along with children's playground are the same structures already promised in the first Section 106 agreement.

Whilst this is not the subject of a live planning application, and therefore not for the Council to offer comment at this stage, it is understood the community centre land identified on this scheme is the same structure as that identified in the original SUE.

- There is very little available green space on the current development and this is proposed to be 'shared' with the proposed new development.

The proposed new development off Oteley Road is not currently subject to a formal planning applications, the scale and housing need together with green space will be assessed as part of any future application.

- There is no current GP Surgery, pharmacy or school and no space to put these.

There is no GP Surgery, pharmacy or school directly associated with the development of the SUE. However, the SUE has provided £500,000 of S106 funding towards additional education provision in Shrewsbury.

- All Active Travel routes on both the current and proposed developments are shared & one on the new proposal is a public right of way.

The active travel routes for the wider Shrewsbury South Sustainable Urban extension were considered as part of the original outline planning permission and subsequent reserve matter planning applications. Active travel and connectivity will be assessed as any future planning application.

- There appear to be no bus provisions, other than the current Connect On-Demand Service, apart from a possible bus gate on the proposed new development.

Shropshire Council are currently in the process of reviewing bus provision along Oteley Road, it is likely that bus provision will be an on-demand service, funded by developer contributions.

- How will Shropshire Council provide the necessary infrastructure of GP Surgery, Pharmacy, School(s), green space/leisure areas, public transport and Active Travel?

See responses to earlier questions.

Question from Tamarin Bibow

1 I have been the owner of Ruyton Hall, in Ruyton XI Towns and have lived in the property with my husband and young family since January 2022.

2 We live on part of the B 4397 linking the A5 at Shotatton Cross roads with Baschurch, heavily used by traffic of all sorts heading to and from the industrial estates and business parks on the North side of Shrewsbury as a “rat run”.

3 Not all the HGVs, vans, cars which blight our village can be diverted onto more suitable roads. But it is clear that “through” drivers would not choose to use lanes through rural villages like ours if there was a quicker and better route. However, at present the only practical alternative is to use the A5 southern by-pass, the A49 etc, a very much less direct route.

4 I have been a Parish Councillor for nearly two years. I'm pleased that Shropshire Council support Cllr Dan Morris, Cabinet Member for Highways is moving the project forward.

5 I would very much like him now to supply more detail as to: - the next steps - how quickly he expects the Final Business Case to be completed - when we might expect to see a start in constructing this very much needed new road

Response from Councillor Dan Morris, Portfolio Holder for Highways

Point 3 – I can confirm that the traffic modelling submitted with the successful NWRR Planning Application, and endorsed by National Highways and Shropshire Council Highways, fully supports the statement made on existing through traffic in places such as Ruyton re-routing to more appropriate roads on completion of the NWRR.

Point 5 – In line with the current programme, the submission of the Full Business Case to DfT is expected by December 2024 at the latest. Once approved, this would allow construction of the NWRR to commence Spring 2025.

Question from Michael Dineen

How much does the budget of £41,655,000 for the REFOCUS-Shirehall relocation (Civic Centre or Hub) exceed or is less than the cost of refurbishing the existing Shirehall and allowing for commercial letting of excess space not required by Shropshire Council for its own use? Has a report been prepared on the office and property needs of Shropshire Council in Shrewsbury, and if so, has it considered how they can be met in the existing building?

Response from Councillor Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Assets

On the 24 February 2022, Full Council formally declared the Shirehall building surplus to requirements and delegated to officers the ability to agree and implement the disposal strategy and agree terms for sale subject to the final approval of full Council. On the 14 December 2023, full Council agreed activity to move forward the decommissioning and disposal in private session.

Shirehall has failed technically, functionally and economically and of course it's green credentials are extremely poor. Detailed work was undertaken in terms of feasibility for the refurbishment of the Shirehall and related to the key decisions taken at the Council meeting of 16 July 2020. In the report it advised that the Stage 2 financial business case as prepared by Rider Levett Bucknell (RLB) identified an estimated cost of £24.1m, this was on the basis of refurbishing the Shirehall, which was presented to full Council in December 2018. Due to inflation and comparable scope of works, this figure is likely now to be in excess of £30m.

To be really clear – Shirehall has massive ongoing life cycle cost maintenance and energy requirements that would require significant investment in both the structure

and fabric and electrical and mechanical systems. These have been detailed in previous reports to Council.

The figure of £41,655,000 for the REFOCUS-Shirehall relocation (Civic Centre or Hub) is not recognised in this context and presumably is taken from a previous Council paper. The commitment to deliver a multi-agency hub as part of the Riverside redevelopment remains and work is underway supported by central government funding to deliver demolition and enabling work; with a substantive planning approval now in place and recent consultation completed on the next application work is moving at pace.

The business case for a new modern office development which would take the form of the MAH is being developed and this will take into account likely income streams from tenants in the form of both commercial and public sector partners. The viability of this aspect of development will be fully tested within the context of the wider town centre development and will be put before full Council.

The Council currently plans to take one small part of the building reflective of the transformation and changes which the organisation is going through and the resultant changes in demand for physical spaces both centrally and across the County. The Council (working on the principles of the Shropshire Plan) now requires less than half of the Net floor area used by Shropshire Council in the past. It is proposed that the Gross Internal Area shrinks from the 18,520m² at Shirehall to approximately 10,800m² in the Multi-Agency Hub (MAH) of which the Council requirement currently stands at 4200m²; with the rest potentially let to key public sector partners or other commercial tenants. Hence the Council's organisational financial commitment as part of a new office development will also be put before full Council for a decision based on the business case and this is distinct from the financial case for the whole MAH office development. The Council no longer needs an administrative base of the scope and scale of the Shirehall and due to the current market decline in demand for office space other interest has been extremely limited for the Shirehall.

The disposal strategy is currently in the process of being developed by Cornovii Developments Limited in conjunction with the Council's Estates Team which will consider the future uses of the site and its context within Shrewsbury and its locality.

Question from Andrew Bebb

Can you please explain why the Award winning Health Checks conducted in the Countys' Livestock Markets are being reduced in terms of frequency and what plans are in place for the continuation of this essential service beyond September?

Response from Councillor Cecilia Motley, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Thank you for the question.

Shropshire Council's public health team work actively to support our most vulnerable communities, through preventative work to tackle health inequalities, including work in our rural communities. One example is the award-winning health checks for the farming community programme, in partnership with Shropshire Rural Support (SRS),

Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI), National Farmers Union (NFU) and the livestock markets, alongside our Animal Welfare officers, that launched in January 2023 at Shrewsbury livestock market.

Overall, the programme has grown and expanded in the short time since it launched, to now include 5 livestock markets all around the County, with regular visits from the community wellbeing outreach team to carry out health checks and signpost wellbeing support. This ensures that farmers from across the County now have access to this valuable offer.

This work has always been funded by temporary, one-off opportunistic grant funding, initially arising from the pandemic and has continued to be supported through ring-fenced reserves. As such, the service that we provide is led by the need in each community as well as the resource that is available, with close partnership working to inform the development of the service.

Officers continue to actively explore new sources of funding and grants to extend our core statutory services to improve access to our communities including health checks for the farming community. Over the last 3 years, our public health team have been successful in this, securing approximately £5m in external funds to support such activities.

Shropshire Council remains committed to prioritising support for our farming community and will share further updates with key stakeholders, including Shropshire Rural Support, in the near future.