

CABINET

17th April 2024

Members' Questions

Councillor Ruth Houghton

In light of the recently approved Medium Term Financial Plan which includes the reduction from 5 to 3 Household Waste Recycling centres recycling will the Portfolio Holder please provide the following information:

1) For each of the five household recycling centres (HRCs) the annual tonnage of:

- a) metal recycled
- b) plastic recycled
- c) paper and cardboard recycled
- d) green and food waste composted.

2) For each of the five former districts:

- a) The tonnage of green waste (including each year)
- b) an estimate of the number of households that present a green bin for collection at least one point in the year.

3) For each of the five HRCs:

- a) The gross annual cost of running each HRC
- b) The net annual costs of running each HRC allowing for costs of incinerating or landfilling non-recyclables and the income from recyclables.

Councillor David Vasmer

Following the decision to close the University Centre in Shrewsbury

- 1) what plans does the Council have for the future use of student accommodation at Mardol House
- 2) Given that this accommodation was solely built for students, is there any risk of legal action against the Council or any agreements that would result in a substantial loss to the Council when students are no longer based in Shrewsbury?
- 3) What plans are being made for existing students and staff who were based in Shrewsbury? Will these students finish their studies in Shrewsbury?

4) What is the total loss to the local economy if students and staff are no longer based in Shrewsbury?

5) What is the total investment made by the Council in the University Centre Shrewsbury since it was set up in the autumn of 2014? The figure should include any penalties or losses identified in Question 2 above, the running costs of Mardol House not covered by income from students, the loss of rental income as a result of the University Centre's free use of the Guildhall and Rowley's House.

Councillor Heather Kidd

Pothole filling has been slow and often not very efficient. When a claim for damage comes into the Council who pays? Is it the Council or Kier who have failed to fill the pothole in a timely manner?

Councillor Alex Wagner

Rowley's House was used by the University Centre before being handed back to the Council who commissioned Arrol Architects and TDR Heritage in October last year to report on its management and future use. That report was promised in the Spring of this year so will it be published before the end of May?

Councillor Andy Boddington

On 3 April 2024, Ludlow was gridlocked from early morning to late afternoon. The vital 722 park and ride bus service which is meant to run every 30 minutes, took an hour to complete its journey.

The problem occurred because roadworks, all within the control of Shropshire Council, were scheduled at the same time. Three-way lights control for traffic on Sheet Road and Foldgate Lane and the long standing single lane closure outside Ludlow rail station resumed after being lifted for Easter. The town traffic could cope with these. However, the total closure of Henly Road for a minor resurfacing task halted traffic circulation. Traffic diverted onto the A49 Ludlow bypass where the council had decided to mow the verges with traffic lights in place to protect the crew.

The result, gridlock, chaos and damage to town trade.

My question to the portfolio holder for highways is:

1) What mechanisms does the council have in place to ensure that simultaneous roadworks do not cause excessive traffic delays, even gridlock?

2) Why was the non-urgent work on Henley Road and the A49 mowing scheduled at the same time as other traffic restrictions were in place?

3) Why was litter not collected from the A49 before mowing took place, leading shredded litter that will be difficult or impossible to collect?

Councillor Tom Biggins

There have been detailed discussions over several years about the Community Asset Transfer of the Contractors Yard / Sherrymill Hill Car Park from Shropshire Council to Whitchurch Town Council.

No date has yet been assigned for the transfer. Shropshire Council in correspondence have made clear that they are willing to give and WTC have made clear that they are willing to receive this asset transfer.

Indeed, in an email of 4th January 2024, written by Shropshire Council, it is stated that a) the property team at Shropshire Council were being instructed to expedite the Community Asset Transfer of this site and b) it is recognised that helping enable WTC to take a longer term investment decision in this site will also help in the short term, through enabling WTC to review a broader range of options to develop further storage capacity within the site.

Three months later this has still not happened and local Members are concerned about any further delay.

For clarification please can we have a date, fixed now, identifying when the Community Asset Transfer of this site to be completed?

URGENT QUESTION – Councillor Roger Evans

I have recently been informed by some residents that Shropshire Council is consulting on stopping the School Library Service (SLS). I am dismayed that elected members were once again ignored and not informed about this proposal.

I copy below sections from the messages received.

.....I am most concerned about the proposed closure of the SLS and the fact there is no public consultation about this. I seem to be bombarded with social media asking my views about green bins – but the decision to remove books from children is taken in private. I question why this is the case?

..... Schools buy into the Schools Library Service (SLS) as a way of getting up to date books about our topics and new fiction books

..... A couple of days ago I was in a class as they talked about their new topic books and the children were so excited! They may be a digital generation, but real books matter and research shows that real books help children's learning.....

..... Reading enjoyment is the most important factor for whether children will do well in school and exams. Having access to attractive books on a wide range of subjects is important for encouraging children to read

..... In school as we have SLS books, we can give all children access to lovely books regardless of the income of their family and how much cash is left to buy books.....

Does the cabinet member support this service being withdrawn.