

MEMBER QUESTIONS
COUNCIL 18 JULY 2024

Question from Councillor Simon Harris

River Severn: Water Quality

2023 saw (according to data provided by The Rivers Trust) continuing over spills of sewage (partially treated / untreated) in to our rivers; though disappointingly the quality of the water / sewage being released and spilt is not monitored by the Water Companies that are responsible for these releases / spills.

In response to a Motion regarding river water quality (and the possible application, by the Council, of the Grampian Principles) supported at Full Council in January 2022 a Task & Finish Group was established.

The Group developed several practical actions (defined in the recommendations as 'hard' recommendations) aimed at using the Council's role eg in the Planning process, to work towards an improvement in river water quality and specifically a reduction in the sewage pollution that is released.

Can the portfolio holder advise which, if any, of these recommendations have been 'actioned'?

Can the portfolio holder also advise whether, in the light of a recent successful Freedom of Information request regarding Northumberland Water, the Council will now make a Freedom of Information request requiring Severn Trent Water to advise how many releases (overspills) they have permitted in 2023 on days when there was no rainfall ie days when the sewage treatment plants should not have been overwhelmed?

For the record the Task & Finish Group has requested this information from Severn Trent Water but the request was declined.

Question from Councillor Roy Aldcroft

Greenfields Sports Pitches Market Drayton

For over 10 years there has been suggestions of building developments at Greenfields and moving the sports facilities to a new location. This clearly hasn't happened and due to the uncertainty of the future of Greenfields there has been no investment in facilities. Greenfields is the home of Market Drayton Town FC, Market Drayton RFC, Market Drayton Tennis Club, Market Drayton Tigers (Youth Football) and Men's Sheds. The site is now suffering from over use and the condition of facilities and infrastructure is a major concern. Market Drayton has the 3rd largest population in our authority area. It's a growing population and includes a high percentage of young residents.

Can the PH give an update on what plans are being developed to improve Sports facilities in Market Drayton?

Question from Councillor Christian Lea

Pyrolysis Plant

Shropshire Council resolved to invest £2m in a Pyrolysis Plant in order to produce Biochar. Locations for the site of the plant being considered were reported as , Bridgnorth, Ludlow or Shrewsbury.

It was later resolved to enter into a Joint Venture (JV) with a third party, to the tune of £500K so that the project could be accelerated.

Can the PH please:

- Update council on the progress with this investment?
- Confirm that the JV is on track or are there any risks that council should be aware of?
- Confirm that the original plan for a Shropshire based plant is still being planned for, and not being forgotten about due to the JV?

Question from Councillor Brian Williams

A recent well-researched article in the Daily Telegraph detailed the following methods of repairing potholes.

- A. A company called Roadmole makes a remote controlled machine that cuts circular sections out of the road surface round potholes rather than the usual squares whose corners can become weak points for water seepage.
- B. Stoke-on-Trent City Council are using a JCB "pothole pro" which can fix a pothole in eight minutes at a cost of £30.
- C. The Nu-phalt Thermal Road Repair machine heats up a damaged patch of the road to recycle existing macadam to ensure that it bonds better with the new patch.
- D. The Kiely Multipatcher, which needs only one person to operate it, combines a pothole repair with small-scale surface dressing.

Will the portfolio holder undertake research to examine whether any of these methods could be cost-effective on Shropshire's roads?

Question from Councillor Roger Evans

As a result of the recent General Election a new government has been elected.

We note that in recent publications a number of claims were made, These include.

- Planning Permission has been given for the North West Relief Road. Can you please confirm is this true and if it is when was that issued.
- A statement was made that £153m had been secured and that a firm commitment had been made stating that the then government would pay in full, the cost to build this Relief Road. Can you confirm if this is true and if it is when did council receive notification of this commitment.

Given the increased precarious state of this council's finances, the Liberal Democrat Group ask that the present Conservative administration agree to declaring a moratorium be put into effect regarding any more work and spending involved with the construction of the North West Relief Road. This to remain in place until official confirmation is received concerning what the actual commitment our Government towards its cost is.

Question from Councillor Ruth Houghton

Due to phosphate levels in the River Clun, housing development has not been possible in the catchment area of the River Clun for a number of years. This includes development in Bishop's Castle where effluent from the Sewerage works is discharged into the River Kemp which joins the River Clun.

There are now local concerns that proposals are being developed that effluent from the Bishop's Castle Sewerage works be transferred from the River Kemp and discharged into the River Onny instead. The River Onny is a major tributary of the River Teme, which has recently been awarded bathing water quality status, and is also a river used for the fishing of Trout, Chubb and Grayling. Salmon Parr has also been observed in the River Onny

Does the portfolio holder agree that it would be unacceptable to discharge effluent into a river that is currently in near pristine condition and if so how will Shropshire Council ensure that the River Onny is protected under these circumstances.