

CABINET
12 FEBRUARY 2025
RESPONSE TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Keith Trubshaw

FAO: The Leader Of The Council

RE Booking into Waste disposal site. Why, when it will cause...

Traffic chaos when vehicles are even slightly early and can't get in,
Fly tipping increase.

There have never been issues of chaos.

Will far less use, because of the inconvenience, give you an excuse to close it?

The booking systems aims are to:

- Help to reduce congestion and queuing times, this is why the sites are not busy as the slots are being managed to 15 minutes per visit.
- Increase recycling, as centre staff will be able to better engage with visitors so they can put their waste and recycling into the correct containers.
- Reduce the amount of trade waste taken to the centres, not only is it illegal for businesses to dispose of their waste at our sites, Shropshire residents pay the cost for it.
- Open to all Shropshire residents with no restriction on the number of visits residents can make in a car.

There have been over 55,000 bookings over the last two months so for the majority of residents the system works.

With the introduction of any new system there will always be some teething problems, in this instance we have asked our contractor to be pragmatic when residents turn up either early or late to accommodate them where possible however, this is difficult on a weekend when the sites are busy, so we would always encourage people to turn up as close to their booked time as possible.

The impact of the booking system recently introduced is not yet fully understood as it is too early to tell but officers within Waste Services are monitoring visitor numbers.

Graham Betts

I did not understand the reply to my question at Cabinet on 17 July 2024. I was advised to contact Councillor Schofield for clarification. I received no reply. May I please have a reply?

Having read the details provided [*by Councillor Schofield*] I must clarify my question referred specifically to Red Deer Road which has been adopted, and not the attached Bowbrook development, which has not been adopted. You provided details of various legislation, but did not mention the 1988 Road Traffic Act, section 21, [*unlawful parking on cycle paths*] and how SC propose to work with the Police to ensure adequate compliance of the law. The issue of concern is not that the route is a cycle path, but cars are repeatedly parked on it and the lack of signage is cited as a fundamental cause.

Shropshire Council do not have powers to enforce parking issues unless parking traffic regulations orders are in place. The police can intervene and could prosecute under Section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 (wilfully obstructing the highway without lawful authority or excuse), Section 21 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (Prohibition of driving or parking on cycle tracks) or Section 22 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (leaving a vehicle in a dangerous position, so as to cause an injury). Obstructive parking can be one of interpretation and the circumstances presented at the time are considered on each occasion.

Shropshire Councils Traffic Engineering team regularly liaise with West Mercia Police over a number of matters. The parking issues raised have been added to Shropshire Councils list to monitor and will consider the introduction of traffic regulation orders, but these will be in line with other priorities and available funding. Funding is extremely limited and needs to consider many demands and needs across the county, with current funding primarily focussed on personal injury accident sites. We therefore suggest residents liaise with their local town council and councillor who may be able to support their case and help us prioritise what we do moving forwards, through the 'Place Plan process' which looks at utilising other funding opportunities.

Regarding the specific mention of Section 11.11.3, Chapter 3 Traffic Signs Manual 2019, I do not understand the subsequent comment *"Due to the current status of the route and the guidance, it is not a requirement to provide repeater signs"*. Can you expand on this, in particular the term 'current status'? Red Deer Road cannot have a status beyond adopted?

The reference to the status of the route was in relation to the Bowbrook Meadows which was referenced with Red Deer Road in the original question. In accordance with the response to the original question placed in July 2024, the guidance suggests that repeater signs, 'may' be placed along a route. As outline to the previous matter raised above with regard to parking, this has been added to Shropshire Councils list to monitor.

I also refer to 11.11.4 in the 'manual' and the designated sign 1057. Only one of these exists with nothing to notify persons that it is a cycle track from Mytton Oak Road toward Hanwood Road. This is an omission needing immediate address. Additionally, the sign at Hanwood Road is becoming obliterated.

In accordance with the response to the question raised July 2024, we are aware of the concerns raised by residents with regard to the lack of repeaters along the route and the conflict that has occurred on occasion between road users. We are therefore looking into the matter and will liaise with the developers prior to adoption.

Emma Bullard

Shropshire Council's Active Travel Manager has left the authority and so has at least one Shropshire Highways officer who was dealing with active travel schemes.

Please can you tell us whether the authority any longer has capacity to improve active travel infrastructure? If so, has the relevant work programme been published and where can it be seen? When will it be available if it is not currently?

In particular:

what work is being done to design and implement the priority LCWIP schemes? (the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan was approved by Cabinet in March 2024)

what work is being done to design and implement active travel schemes in Shrewsbury town centre? Despite what Cllr Morris claimed in September 2024, such schemes are not dependent on whether the North West Road is delivered. This has been made clear in numerous reports including the Big Town Plan, Shrewsbury Moves strategy and the Masterplan for the Riverside redevelopment.

Recently a toucan crossing was installed on Oteley Road, Shrewsbury, and the design has made conditions on that busy road substantially worse for cycling. Was the design of that scheme signed off by anyone with a brief for active travel or sustainable school travel?

Shropshire Council is currently going through a resizing process as it works towards a new model and financial sustainability. An inevitable consequence of that has been a reduction in staffing numbers, with voluntary redundancy playing a part of that process. The organisational structure is currently being reviewed from top down and all areas of the council will need be considered within the new operating model and how services are re-shaped.

The Council retains a strong internal Active Travel Team, who are working closely with Active Travel England (ATE) and local stakeholders to deliver on its stated priorities around Schools Streets, and the priorities as outlined within the approved Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan. Funding has already been received through ATE for the furthering of this programme in 2025/26 and many schemes will move from concept to design in this period across the county. The Council has committed to prioritising delivery of; the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road, Shrewsbury Big Town Plan, the Shrewsbury Moves strategy and the Masterplan for the Riverside redevelopment. The synergies and cumulative Active Travel benefits to the town of all of these initiatives, has been fully detailed to date in exhaustive local consultations, and all are fully aligned with the wider emerging Local Transport Plan.

As regards specific scheme designs, these are fully reviewed as is required through Road Safety Audit procedures, which where appropriate will also be assessed in the light of current Active Travel design guidance.

With reference to the Oteley Road Toucan crossing, road safety audits recommended cycle lane provision, which was subsequently included in design updates. Regrettably installation did not include the design revisions, which has now been addressed and will be rectified on the 15th February. These works will include cycle lane and shortened zigzags, mitigating potential vehicle movements that may pose a danger to cyclists.

Matt Lakin

Albrighton Village Action Group (AVAG)'s campaign against Boningale Homes' opportunistic overdevelopment proposal has highlighted why Shropshire's Local Plan is so important.

Local Plans are critical in preventing unsustainable, inappropriately-sized developments on the wrong side of villages - far from commuter train stations and motorways - and causing irreparable damage to our communities, heritage, farmland, and vital Green Belt.

Green Belt surrounding Albrighton is of paramount importance, not only to Shropshire but also to the distinctive character and agricultural landscape of the broader Black Country and Birmingham region.

Shropshire's proposed response to the Planning Inspectorate presents two potential outcomes:

If accepted, the Council will have six months to identify sites for 1500 additional houses using existing Sustainability Assessments; followed by launching a New Local Plan and Call for Sites from Autumn 2025.

If not accepted, a New Local Plan and Call for Sites would need to start immediately - just eight months earlier!

In either scenario, how will Shropshire ensure that speculative, unsustainable developments do not proceed? We must avoid housing projects that are unsuitable for our communities, poorly scaled, located away from transport hubs and encroach on critical Green Belt land.

This risk is underscored by 1120 objections registered on the Shropshire Planning portal and over 3700 residents who petitioned against Boningale Homes' unsustainable proposal. This is 80% of Albrighton's electoral roll.

Shouldn't a New Call for Sites be initiated now to allow ample time to identify the most suitable locations and secure the best possible outcome for Shropshire?

Firstly, subject to Cabinet agreement on 12th Feb, it is hoped the positive and pragmatic response to the Local Plan Inspectors will enable the continuation of the current Local Plan process and allow the Council to adopt the Plan in mid 2026. As the question correctly states, it is however also recognised that further Plan making is necessary regardless of this situation, starting later in 2025, due to the Council's changing housing need position as a direct result of the national changes to the standard methodology placed upon Local Authorities. At this stage the Council considers the most appropriate time to undertake a 'call for sites' is later in 2025 to inform the next plan making process.

Also, as a direct result of these national changes to the housing need calculation, Shropshire cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply. In these circumstances the NPPF's 'Presumption in favour of sustainable development' is afforded more weight in decision making. The Cabinet report sets out the implications of this housing land supply position on decision making. It also recognises there is likely to be an upturn in speculative proposals as a result of this situation.

However, it is important to emphasise it is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, not all development. For speculative proposals, the Council will therefore need to assess on a case by case basis whether it would lead to genuine sustainable development, and in doing so it will need to consider a range of material considerations, including where relevant, the evidence base prepared to support the Local Plan. The Cabinet paper specifically identifies relevant parts of national policy important in assessing overall sustainability, being whether or not the development is in a sustainable location; if it makes efficient use of land; secures well designed places; and provides affordable housing. In addition, national Green Belt policy will continue to apply to relevant applications. Consultee comments will also be considered in the application process.

Mike Streetly

The Financial Strategy identifies a budget uplift of £111M for the NWRR, a movement of £99M from previous strategies. This is very late in the day for such a large movement when the council knew in autumn 2022 that the cost had at least doubled. It seems from the strategy document that the council believes that the £111M will all be met by additional grant funding.

- 1) Could you please clarify what other sources of income (apart from grant funding) are identified within the Financial Strategy for meeting the full cost of the NWRR/OLR and how much is expected from each?

Further information will be provided when the Medium Term Financial Strategy is presented to Council on 27 February 2025.

- 2) The Full Business case for the North West Relief Road was due to be submitted to Full Council for consideration in Sept 2024. Could you please confirm the date that it will now be submitted and the reasons for this delay?

The North West Relief Road Full Business Case (FBC), and the date at which it will be considered by Council, will be announced following the issue of Full Planning Notice by the Local Planning Authority. The most recent delay has been due to the project's latest carbon projections and mitigation plan being evaluated, and approved, by Northern Planning Committee.

- 3) Could you also please confirm the implications of this further delay on the construction programme (start and end dates) and cost and whether these further increases are factored into the Financial Strategy?

The programme to completion to be submitted as part of the FBC fully accommodates any delay to date, and the FBC costs are also in line with this programme. The Financial Strategy will reflect the most up to date figures we have going forwards.

Dr Jamie Russell

Item 6 (Climate Change) in the Financial Monitoring Report for Quarter 3 2024/25 states: "The Council's Financial Strategy supports its strategies for Climate Change and Carbon Reduction in several ways".

However, the Financial Strategy itself includes a £100m uplift provision for the North West Relief Road (NWRR). Recent carbon reports have shown that building the NWRR will prevent the council from achieving its net zero by 2030 target. Meanwhile, I understand that a complaint has been made to the monitoring officer about the Northern Planning Committee unilaterally voting to scrap the net zero 2030 target that was previously agreed by full council. Clearly, the NWRR is not compatible in any way with the council's previously-agreed net zero plans.

With this in mind, please can you correct the wording of Item 6 to read: "The Council's Financial Strategy means that it will no longer be able to achieve its stated aims for Climate Change and Carbon Reduction"?

The revisions to the carbon management approach for the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road were considered by Northern Planning Committee on 21st January 2025. The ongoing broader alignment with the Councils existing Carbon and Climate Change commitments, and the ability of the project to discharge its carbon obligation both in terms of methodology, timeframe and allocated funding within the project budget, were both accepted by the Committee. Further information on the agreed approach, and its links to the Councils current Carbon and Climate Change obligations, are in the public domain as part of the Committee papers.