

## Public Questions

### Council 27 February 2025

#### **Question from Terri Trickett**

The recent Shropshire Council budget consultation gave residents two options for general waste collections: both were 3 weekly collections. The Summer months will inevitably result in 'malodorous waste' and likely become a public health problem by attracting vermin, including flies and rats.

Bayston Hill residents' concerns are:

1. As the council no longer offer food waste collections it is estimated that 27% of food waste now goes into general waste;
2. Composting of food waste can be an alternative. Many in rural locations have tried this and it has attracted vermin so is not viable;
3. Families cannot request a larger bin as they do not meet the current criteria, yet 3 weekly collections will make it impossible to manage their general waste;
4. The Environment Act 2021 states that there is a legal requirement for councils to collect food waste weekly by 31st March 2026 and that this '**...will ensure frequent collections of malodorous waste, and will stop the trend towards 3 or 4 weekly bin collections.**'

Therefore, my question is

1. what safeguards you have taken to respond to residents' concerns, protect the environment and public health by transferring to 3 weekly collections without the necessary weekly food waste collections and how has this been published?
2. Can the council reconsider this matter and at least wait until weekly food waste collections are introduced?
3. Can the criteria for allowing larger black bins be changed to include all families and those disposing waste associated with personal care?

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

1. *what safeguards you have taken to respond to residents' concerns, protect the environment and public health by transferring to 3 weekly collections without the necessary weekly food waste collections and how has this been published?*

A move to three-weekly collections of general waste in Shropshire will not be part of the council's budget for the year 2025/26 and will not be considered until at least the 2026/27 financial year with any changes only considered once plans for a new separate weekly food waste collection have been confirmed.

After considering the feedback from the consultation and with all councils legally required to introduce weekly food waste collections from 2026, Cabinet agreed not to consider changes to general waste collections until weekly food waste collections are introduced sometime in 2026/27.

The implementation of weekly food waste collections is currently being planned by the council. Any change to collection frequency would be subject to changes being agreed by the council's Cabinet and full Council, public consultation, and discussions with Veolia, the council's waste contractor.

2. *Can the council reconsider this matter and at least wait until weekly food waste collections are introduced?*

The weekly food waste collections will be through a smaller separate bin emptied every week so food waste will not need to go in your general waste bin.

3. *Can the criteria for allowing larger black bins be changed to include all families and those disposing waste associated with personal care?*

To reassure residents, if changes to the frequency of waste collections are to be considered, before any new change would be implemented measures will be considered to help residents with large households who may struggle with three weekly collections, or who have specific needs such as disposing of medical waste or nappies.

### **Question from Carolyn Mahy**

As part of the Labour government's push to build 1.5 million homes, it has been reported in the press that landowners will be compelled to sell derelict sites, such as shops, car parks and office blocks to local authorities at a "fair price", excluding the so called "hope value" The House of Fraser building is in my view a prime example of a property calling out to be converted into apartments for rental or social housing, right in the town centre, potentially with small retail shops on the ground floor and the housing above. The increased footfall from such a project would be of great benefit to the town centre. Further examples ripe for compulsory purchase and conversion to housing are the former J W Thornton premises and the Sewing Machine Centre at 57 and 58 Wyle Cop, which is one of the main entrances into the town. Their derelict appearance certainly does not give a good first impression to shoppers and visitors. To the best of my knowledge all these buildings have been empty since at least 2019. At the same time the number of homeless people requiring accommodation is growing. I therefore wish to ask whether the council has any plans for using its

extended powers to acquire these properties and put them to good use in the town centre, preferably for conversion to much needed homes? Would government funding be available for such a scheme?

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

Shropshire Council is actively monitoring the Government's planning reforms. However, it is anticipated that many of the new powers that have been referred to in the press will require primary legislation via the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, which is expected to be introduced to Parliament next month.

With regard to the two empty properties referred to in the question, the Council understands that the former Rackhams store in Shrewsbury has recently been acquired by a property developer. In terms of the J W Thornton premises at 57-58 Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury, a developer is currently in the process of implementing their planning permission and listed building consent to convert the building to provide eight new residential units. The Council is not therefore seeking to intervene at either of these properties at the current time and would normally only seek to do so as a last resort.

The Council is also seeking to provide the new homes required in the County through the Local Plan-making process, so that this growth takes place in a planned manner. Officers also hold regular meetings with organisations such as Homes England and the West Midlands Combined Authority, to ensure that we remain aware of the funding opportunities available to us to assist with the provision of new housing within Shropshire.

### **Question from Victoria Moore**

I have lived in the Oteley road area for the last 6 years in new build houses on both the Sutton grange estate and the spinney / Oteley gardens.

These, and other new build estates, including Tudor park, galliers and sovereign park, all of which are built along Oteley road, have all suffered from the same issues.

It's been at least 2 years or more since developers have left, yet we are all having issues including no football parking signs and wanting permits for match days, issues with street lights and roads and more dog poo bins especially by the quarry walk. All which are being reported on fix my street like we are told to do but aren't being done as they are yet to be adopted, and the developers don't seem to want to know either.

We are all paying full council tax yet we are not getting a service. When will Shropshire council take over adoption of these estates?

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

In response to the concerns raised, there are a number of developments within the vicinity of Oteley Road at different stages of the construction and adoption process. Shropshire Council officers are working with the individual developers to move forward with the adoption. It remains Shropshire Council's intention to adopt the roads, footways and street lighting within all developments. There has been positive engagement with all developers regarding moving the adoption process forward. With regard to the Sutton Grange development, Taylor Wimpey have recently undertaken surfacing works to bring the roads up to an adoptable standard, the adoption of Sutton Grange and all sites are dependent on the adoption of the sewers located beneath the areas to be adopted. We are in regular contact with representatives from Millers Homes with regard to their sites. The Spinney constructed by Bellway Homes has just been placed on 12 months maintenance, so is likely to be adopted within the next 12 to 18 months. Other sites located to the west of Oteley Road are being progressed in close partnership with Land Improvement Holdings who are the Master Developer for the Shrewsbury South Urban Extension. Residents requiring an update on the adoption of any development can contact [highwaysdevelopment@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysdevelopment@shropshire.gov.uk)

## **Question from Jon Moore**

The council recently ran a trial to restrict access to Springfield and Mereside areas of Sutton Farm during school drop off and pick up for Mereside school hours.

This ended on the 24th December yet there has been no confirmation regarding whether the scheme will continue and if so, if any changes will be made based on feedback from residents.

Please can the council confirm what the results of the trial were and what the future plans are?

## **Response from Councillor Kirstie Hurst-Knight, Portfolio Holder for Children & Education**

Shropshire Council's Cabinet recommended the proposal for a School Streets trial at its Cabinet Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

The public consultation ran online for the School Street in Shrewsbury between 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and 24<sup>th</sup> December 2024. Members of the public were invited to express their support, raise an objection or pass comment on the proposals. Full plans were available to be viewed online and at Shrewsbury Library.

A total of 64 responses were received to the consultation. In summary there were a total of 29 respondents who lodged objections (45.31%) and 2 respondents who

support the scheme (3.1%). In addition to this a total of 33 comments around the scheme were received.

It is accepted that the closure of the roads surrounding Mereside Primary has caused some inconvenience to residents and parents and carers. However, it is important to consider that the aim of the scheme is to create a safer environment outside of Mereside Primary School which, prior to the introduction of the trial, faced difficulties with inconsiderate parking by parents and carers.

As part of the scheme, exemption permits have been granted to residents within the zone and individuals meeting the criteria, including blue badge holders, school staff and carers. Automatic exemptions are also granted to emergency services, waste collections, taxis, public transport services, Royal Mail vehicles and wedding convoys or funeral corteges.

It is also important to note that the scheme is supported by Councillor Dartnall and the school's Head Teacher. The Sustainable Travel Team will continue to work with the school on travel planning, have offered WOW travel tracker and scootability and bikeability training to support pupils and families to make the switch to sustainable and safe travel. The school are also eligible to receive Shropshire Council's free 'Our Journey' virtual road safety education programme.

The objections received are not regarded to be complex and, as part of the process, are currently being considered by the Assistant Director Growth & Infrastructure to make the experimental order permanent.

### **Question from Shauneey Connor**

What enforcement measures are in place to prevent illegal pavement parking, which obstructs pedestrian access, including for wheelchair users and parents with prams and are there any plans for stricter enforcement or additional signage to deter this issue?

### **Response from Councillor Dan Morris, Portfolio Holder for Highways**

The current position within Shropshire is that where we have parking restrictions that are covered by valid Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO), we are able to take civil enforcement action, via the issuing of a Penalty Charge Notice, against any vehicle in contravention of the TRO, even if the vehicle is on the Footway/pavement or verge, as the majority of the Councils TROs cover from the centre of the carriageway to the rear of the highway boundary (which would include the pavement, footways and verges).

In locations where parking restrictions do not exist then the Council Parking team are unable to enforce the parking of a vehicle on the pavement and the only course of action would be the consideration of whether a criminal offence of wilful obstruction of the highway exists, and this is often a course of action undertaken by the Police as this is a criminal matter rather than a civil parking contravention.

It should be noted that central government have consulted upon and are currently considering whether or not to introduce legislative provisions that could see an introduction of a UK wide footway/pavement parking ban and we await the outcome of any such decision. Where such provisions are introduced then the Council will need to give consideration to adopting those powers, where appropriate, especially in areas where parking restrictions are not in existence.

### **Question from Frank Oldaker**

The total estimated cost of the North West Relief Road is made up of the estimated cost for the Oxon Link section from Churncote to Holyhead Road added to the separate figure for the remainder from Holyhead Road to Battlefield.

Comparing the estimates in 2019 with the current figures it seems extraordinary that the estimated cost of the Oxon Link has increased by a factor of 3.5 whereas that for the remainder has only increased by a factor of 1.8.

Even allowing for design changes this disparity is difficult to understand so can an explanation please be given.

Also since 2019 the risk from extreme weather events has become ever clearer and a significant amount of work would be in the flood prone Severn Valley. Can clarification of the percentage figures used for contingencies please be given both for the high risk work in the flood zone and for the rest of the project

### **Response from Councillor Dan Morris, Portfolio Holder for Highways**

The Target Cost for both sections of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road is based on full open market testing with potential contractors and the supply chain through a comprehensive procurement process. As such this is robust and deliverable and is also reflected in the Councils wider published budgets. Cost estimates around risk and contingencies for the construction of the road were a required element of the pricing approach from the market, and these have been fully captured in their Target Cost submissions