

CABINET

11 JUNE 2025 – PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1 Mike Streetly

Would the council please set out the steps and timescales required for cancelling the NWRR project?

2 Graham Betts

The Cabinet meeting of 5 March 2025 responded to my public question. However, the content was inadequate and I still have not received the information requested under RF#6141 made on 16 January 2024. The response also fails to answer the specific points I raised.

Planning consents, 13/03285/FUL and 13/03534/OUT, for Darwin's Walk and Bowbrook Meadows in Shrewsbury clearly state in section 6.9.1 that £3,595,554 had been raised for local infrastructure projects. This represents an average contribution of £6621 from each house purchase. The information provided only accounts for £1,397,373. No other information or reply accounts for the missing sum of £2,198,181 and the claim by the Cabinet that my request has been serviced is untrue.

Can Shropshire Council, via its Cabinet, please provide the missing information and respond to my questions in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Nolan principles of public life?

3 John Palmer

What have been the costs of owning Shirehall in 2025, month-by-month, and how much has been budgeted to spend on anything associated with the dilapidating monolith until 31 March 2026? Why has the land's potential development for new housing by a purchasing developer, such a fertile and urgent Government priority, not been mentioned publicly as the incoming Cabinet's plan, creating much-needed new homes for Shrewsbury against a backdrop of a crashed Local Plan? Please don't let officers persuade you that these costs cannot be revealed without an FOI request, when refreshed openness and transparency for residents is your welcoming public political mantra. Potentially answering "We know exactly, but it's commercially sensitive, affected by ongoing site disposal negotiations", may indicate "It's a lot, and we're ashamed to admit it publicly"? Potentially answering "We don't know, and don't have the time to calculate it", may indicate an eyes-off-the-ball complacency to inherited wasteful expenditure? When will Cabinet instruct officers urgently to limit this pointless waste of money and bring forward a paper for decision-making by Cabinet and then Full Council, or announce a sale of the land to developers?

MEMBER QUESTIONS

1 Cllr Kate Halliday

On 16th April 2025 the Supreme Court unanimously agreed that the terms 'man' 'woman' and 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 (EA2010) refer to biological sex. Holding a Gender Recognition Certificate does not change sex for the purposes of the EA2010. The ruling protects single sex spaces and services for women and girls giving utmost clarity that women's rights must be protected in law. It also highlights the continued protection for trans people under EA2010. Failure to adhere to the law puts the council at risk of being sued for discrimination. Does the new Administration welcome the clarity in law that the Supreme Court ruling brings, and will it be reviewing the council's policies, procedures, guidance and training materials, including a review of the services it runs and commissions, to ensure that it complies with the ruling?

2 Cllr Julian Dean

In June 2022 Shropshire Cabinet committed to working towards a 20mph scheme within the divisions of Porthill and Copthorne. Repeated efforts by councillors to see this implemented resulted in, on the one hand, a recognition of the case for this to also include new pedestrian crossings on the Copthorne Road and The Mount, but, on the other hand, no progress towards implementation despite money being allocated. Staffing changes and repeated redesigns resulted in delays and, most probably, wasted financial resources.

Can cabinet members update the community as to an expected timetable for new pedestrian crossings and for 20mph limits on residential streets in the area? Can they further provide reassurance as to how similar schemes will be better managed from now on, such that councillors can track progress.

3 Cllr Duncan Kerr

The Green Group on SUC proposed to Council that a waste minimisation strategy be approved in 2021 pointing out that at the at time Shropshire had the highest level of household waste arisings per house in mainland England. This was rejected by the Conservative group. We tried again in December 2023 and this time then then Portfolio-holder agreed to produce a strategy by the 1st September 2024 and that was the unanimous resolution of Council.

A draft strategy was produced, consulted on and reported to, and agreed by, the scrutiny committee but was never tabled before Council for approval. Without an approved strategy we have seen measures such as a booking system for the tip introduced and then rescinded and a badly implemented charging regime for green waste which hasn't met its targets. Both of these very public failings harm our ability to curb household waste arisings and underscore the need for a properly research and documented strategy to support evidenced-based decision-making.

With the need to establish weekly food waste collections from April 2026 the need for this strategy is becoming ever more critical so will the Cabinet commit to bringing the completed strategy for approval at the next Council meeting?

4 Cllr Rosemary Dartnall

We all know Shropshire roads are in poor condition. The council's previous Conservative administration admitted recently that Government investment to bring our roads up to an acceptable standard was short by at least £10m per annum.

A recent local authority study commissioned by Citroen UK found Shropshire pothole repairs were the second most expensive, second only to the Shetland Isles. It's easy to see why islands might face high maintenance costs but not so easy to explain the Shropshire anomaly. It's likely the survey a very simple calculation, but it does indicate we have a worryingly high level of cost combined with a road network in serious decline.

Fortunately, the Labour Government has substantially increased our pothole fund from around £9 m per annum to £33.7 m in the current year, granted expressly to bring our road network up to standard. The Government has made it clear that to retain this preferential level of funding, all local authorities must provide evidence of improved maintenance programmes. The first requirement is to publish criteria online by 30 June including the condition of our roads, how many potholes are being repaired and at what cost. In October more stringent requirements must be fulfilled.

If we do not improve adequately, we will lose funding. Is Shropshire Council Highways changing how it works and is it on track to demonstrate the Government's investment in our roads is being spent wisely for the benefit of all in who live in and visit Shropshire?

5. Cllr Andy Boddington

There is growing interest in using ANPR to prevent driving offences which disturb neighbourhoods and reduce safety of pedestrians and other vehicles.

Lower Corve Street in Ludlow is an example of where we have an urgent need to prevent through traffic. Its use as shortcut has become intolerable with a constant stream of vehicles entering and exiting the access only road. In recent weeks two cars have been written off and many more have been damaged in recent years. Several solutions to this have been explored over the years but none implemented. The view of most people in the community is that only ANPR will check the through traffic and ensure drivers use more suitable (and only slightly longer) roads. 1) What experience does the council have of using ANPR? 2) Has its use proved effective and are there lessons for rollout elsewhere? 3) What policies or guidelines does the council have for installing ANPR across the county where it will prove beneficial? 4) Give the difficulties faced by residents could options for Lower Corve Street be looked at with a matter of urgency?