

CABINET – 21 JANUARY 2026

RESPONSES TO MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

1. Cllr Julian Dean

Question:

In 2023 the Marches LEP invited a partner to develop a Local Area Energy Plan. [The Marches Local Area Energy Plan \(LAEP\)](#)

Meanwhile the West Midlands Combined Authority is developing a LAEP.

Also in the pipeline is the development of 'Regional Energy Strategic Planning'.

Could the relevant portfolio holder provide an outline of strategic or area energy planning that is taking place for Shropshire? Can this help to determine appropriate sites for energy related development, in order to reassure communities that sustainable energy infrastructure proposals are not simply speculative but will make a well-planned contribution to the local and national transition to clean energy? Will strategic energy planning inform the development of the new Local Plan? What steps can and will Shropshire Council take to ensure maximum local benefit from future energy related developments, for example through partnerships, direct ownership or support for community owned energy developments?

Response:

The proposed NPPF, currently subject to consultation by MHCLG, sets an expectation that Local Planning Authorities use their Local Plans to identify areas which are suitable for renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure. Shropshire Council will be setting out its timetable for the preparation of the new Local Plan in Spring 2026, and will be looking for early public consultation on the Local Plan in the Summer. To inform this, the Council will be looking at available evidence, as well as the need to commission further evidence to inform the plan making process. Should areas of land be identified for future energy provision, including through renewable and low carbon sources, communities will have an opportunity to have their say as part of future Local Plan consultations. In addition, the Council will continue to engage with strategic partners, including the West Midlands Combined Authority, regarding the production of a Local Area Energy Plan to align with Shropshire's new Local Plan.

Under the Council's role within our cross border Marches Forward Partnership, we have been leading a programme focused around 'green growth'. This involves joint working across the water and energy sector to align infrastructure and investment planning. National Grid and Scottish Power Energy Networks are actively involved in this work and through their innovation teams are helping to shape joint propositions for future investment across the Marches region. The first phase of this involves feasibility work to understand the energy generation opportunities from water management interventions, using the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme as

a case study. This work is being funded following award of a grant from the Midlands Net Zero Hub and will provide the basis for wider joint work to unlock the energy companies' innovation investment programmes. Longer term, this work is leading to the establishment of a Marches Buyer and Investor Panel with Scottish Power and National Grid already indicating interest to join.

In addition, the strategic partnerships team are using these connections to focus on joint working options specifically for Shropshire. The energy companies are seeking more information from the Council on the future pipeline for growth and infrastructure investment. This will allow more proactive engagement by the energy sector on future energy infrastructure needs and assist in aligning investment asks and programmes. One current area of interest from this work is the Oswestry Innovation Park and exploration of potential future employment uses and how these could be energy generating to provide local community benefits.

2. Cllr Harry Hancock-Davies

Question:

Following the Fraud Investigation motion that was put forward at Full Council in September 2025, and noting that there has been little progress brought forward since then, can the Cabinet confirm whether they are committed to commissioning a Task & Finish Group to explore the Fraud Investigation options that were put forward to Audit Committee in November?

Response:

Thank you, Councillor Hancock-Davies, for your question.

I was present at the council meeting when the motion was referred to the Audit and Governance Committee, as I remember this was agreed without debate. I do note the amount of information that was in your original motion and can confirm the number of staff employed by this council in procurement which you particularly highlighted, is to be increased.

Following the Council meeting in September it was of course placed on the 27th November Agenda of the Audit and Governance Committee. I was again present when it together with additional information including a number of potential delivery model options was debated.

Unfortunately, I have not yet seen the minutes of that meeting and hence the resolved decision the committee made and do note the contents of your question. I am informed a report is being prepared and it is to be added to the forward plan for the March Cabinet. It will be a matter for Cabinet to decide at that point whether to set up, as I again understand it a requested Task and Finish Group.

3. Cllr Craig Emery

Question:

Like many Shropshire residents I welcomed the administrations focus on tackling pot holes across our road network however could Cabinet Members give an update specifically on when the same priority will be given to ensuring signage and white lining is available at all road junctions?

Several residents have contacted me in Selattyn & Gobowen concerned at the lack of both at accident hotspots where residents have witnessed cars driving straight over junctions such as Pentre Dafydd Crossroads and other crossroads in Hengoed.

At a recent Parish Council concerns were also raised that white lining is being completed on top of loose chippings meaning any white lines often disappear within a year.

What plans are in place to address these concerns as Fix My Street doesn't seem to be prioritising the concerns of residents

Response:

We have an annual programme of road marking replenishment, which is informed by highway safety inspections, local knowledge, customer enquiries and other local data.

The maintenance of ad-hoc road marking replacement is a revenue cost, unlike pothole repairs, which are predominantly a capital cost.

The road marking replacement budget therefore faces continual budget pressures, and is regrettably insufficient to keep pace with worn road markings that require refreshment. Therefore, prioritisation is essential for renewal programmes and an ongoing process for the highways service to maximise work outputs to available budget. Junction markings are one example of safety critical work that will be a higher priority with the most severe examples being undertaken first.

If Cllr Emery can provide specific locations of concern for the Parish Council, these will be investigated and updates will be provided.