

## **PUBLIC QUESTIONS COUNCIL 14 MAY 2026**

### **1. Question from Graham Betts**

Referring to the answer to my Cabinet question (12.02.25) Council failed to complete highway marking and signage for public safety on Darwin's Walk, and failed to adopt Bowbrook Meadows, Shrewsbury. This is despite residents paying an average £6621 for CIL etc, totalling £3.59M.

Anti-social, dangerous and obstructive car parking is worse than ever due to absence of control. Council website states "Vehicles parked on pavements – this is a police matter: please report the matter to the police" and also by Council Officers. Council Guidance Note 4 states "It is a criminal offence to obstruct a public right of way", referring to s.137 of 1980 Highways Act. S.137 states obstruction of the highway "in any way", which includes parking on pavements and cycle paths, is an offence, quoting a fine, prison sentence, or both.

When reported to West Mercia Police (WMP) they refused to deal with the problem and state "Police have no powers and no responsibility when it comes to parking in Shropshire, and we have not since 2004. Below is a quote from the Shropshire Council website. Shropshire Council is the sole agency which enforces parking matters in Shropshire". The quotation followed.

Can Council please explain its apparently dysfunctional relationship with WMP regarding controlling these offences and advise how members of the public affected by anti-social pavement parking and dangers are meant to understand this nonsense? Additionally, on what date will Council apply powers to control pavement parking under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act?

### **Response from Councillor Rob Wilson, Portfolio Holder for Transport & Economic Growth**

Whilst it is acknowledged that Darwin's Walk development is adopted highway maintainable at the public expense, the Council is currently in the process of dealing with the wider adoption of the Bowbrook development and as a result no highway powers exist at these locations until such a time the streets are adopted. The council is unable to carry out any enforcement at this location at this time. Powers relating to footpath protection is currently being considered by the council but Department for Transport guidance on this will inform when and how this will take place.

At present there are no timescales attached to that. There also appears to be a misunderstanding of what parking is and what obstruction is. Parking relates to a wheeled vehicle and obstruction relates to anything blocking the highway. The council can enforce parking when a traffic regulation order is present to enforce, obstruction of the highway is still a matter for the police for the time being and I will ensure officers have the appropriate engagement with the police on this.

### **2. Question from Geoff Lowe**

I am writing as a long-term resident of Market Drayton, having lived here for nearly 60 years, to express serious concerns regarding the noticeable decline in essential council services across the town.

Numerous road gullies are heavily silted and appear not to have been cleared for a considerable time, contributing to drainage problems and accelerating road surface deterioration. Could you confirm whether a regular inspection and maintenance programme exists, and when these drains were last serviced?

The condition of public spaces is also becoming unacceptable. Roads and pavements are visibly littered, and some litter and dog waste bins reportedly remain unemptied for extended periods. While local volunteers and businesses are commendably stepping into help, community efforts should not be relied upon to replace core council responsibilities. The recent large-scale litter pick ahead of the town 10k event reflects the extent of the issue.

There is also very little transparency regarding when these services are scheduled or carried out. I would urge the council to publish accessible schedules for drain maintenance, street sweeping, and bin emptying to help restore public confidence.

I would appreciate a response outlining:

1. Current service schedules;
2. Any known service disruptions affecting Market Drayton;
3. Actions being taken to restore acceptable standards; and
4. Plans to improve communication with residents.

If helpful, I would also be willing to walk around Market Drayton with a councillor or officer to discuss the issues directly?

### **Response from Councillor David Vasmer, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment**

Shropshire Council like many local authorities has had to move towards “a risk based approach” to maintain highway drainage, which means we use data to determine how to focus our limited resources. This approach recognises known flooding locations and parts of the network that require more frequent intervention.

It is recognised the funding for highways has experienced significant pressure and this has prevented the service from undertaking as much routine maintenance as we would like to. This has been recognised also by central government and Shropshire has been provided with a greater funding settlement for the next four years. This multi-year funding will provide budget certainty allowing for better planned and preventive maintenance, to not only help improve roads and to prevent potholes forming, but also allowing for more investment in drainage maintenance, that we know is a vitally important part of ensuring the highway does not degrade prematurely.

We are committed to publishing and engaging on future works as much as possible. With our programme of planned and programmed work we will provide advance notification, as we have done with this years highways capital programme. However, some elements of our

work are reactive in nature and subject to changes, so communication in advance is not always possible.

Shropshire Council recognises the concerns about Street Scene services and is clarifying that it is currently undergoing changes to make services more sustainable, efficient, and supportive of towns seeking greater local involvement, although this transition has affected service delivery. A route efficiency review, improved asset management, and changes to staff working arrangements have been introduced to strengthen performance and communication, with plans to publish service frequencies once services stabilise. Some disruption has occurred due to new systems, routing changes, vehicle delivery delays, and incomplete asset data, but temporary measures remain in place to maintain services while improvements are completed. The Council continues to monitor performance closely, address issues promptly, and thanks residents for their patience while working toward a more resilient, transparent, and customer-focused service.

Finally, I would be willing to visit Market Drayton under the auspices of the Town Council to see for myself some of the issues raised and talk about their resolution.

### **3. Question from Peter Gilbert**

Shropshire Council declared a Climate Emergency in May 2019 and agreed a Climate Emergency Strategy with the following key objective: “Reduce Shropshire Council’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to net carbon zero by 2030 (GHG Scope 1, 2 & 3)” [[Shropshire Council: Towards Net-Zero Carbon – Corporate Climate Strategy Nov 2020](#)].

Since the Council’s emergency declaration, the climate crisis has accelerated – the [1.5C threshold](#) has been exceeded for an entire year and we are much closer to several extremely dangerous tipping points, including the [collapse of the critical Atlantic current system](#), which would plunge the UK into Arctic winters and make it impossible to grow crops here.

The Council’s recent [Carbon Monitoring Report FY2025](#) shows that because of initial slow progress in reducing emissions, the Council now needs to take a rapid descent pathway (-16% emissions per year) to achieve net-zero by 2030.

Is the Council still committed to its original Climate Emergency Declaration and therefore to this rapid descent pathway to achieve net-zero by 2030? And if so, how will it achieve this accelerated reduction of carbon emissions?

### **Response from Councillor David Vasmer, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment**

The Council remains committed to the Climate Emergency Declaration made in May 2019 and to the ambition of achieving net zero carbon emissions from its own operations by 2030. The latest Carbon Monitoring Report highlights that a significantly accelerated rate of reduction—around 16% per year—is now required, which reflects the scale of the remaining challenge rather than any change in ambition. The Council recognises that delivering this level of reduction will be extremely challenging and is therefore focused on strengthening delivery of its existing Climate Strategy, including further decarbonising its estate and fleet,

reducing supply chain emissions, embedding carbon considerations into decision-making, and securing external funding while working with partners. The Council recognised we will still have residual emissions to offset and have initiated measures that enable some of these residual emissions to be offset locally. This includes tree planting and the installation of an Energy, Biochar and Carbon Capture system in Ludlow. The strategy will be reviewed later this year and adapted to ensure it remains evidence-led and aligned with national policy, although delivery will also depend heavily on wider factors such as decarbonisation of our supply chain (currently 97% of our emissions), technological development, funding availability and government policy”.

#### **4. Question from Paul Williamson (Shifnal Town Council)**

Is the issue of the Halesfield Recycling Site not being available to Shropshire Residents being reviewed with discussions between Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire Council. This is a ludicrous situation with Shifnal Residents being expected to drive to either Bridgnorth or Shrewsbury to dispose of household waste. This is going to contribute to further instances of fly tipping and hopefully common sense will apply

#### **Response from Councillor David Vasmer, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment**

There has been an historic arrangement (not formal) in place between Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils regarding reciprocal use of the Household Recycling Centres insofar that, residents in cars from both council areas can choose to use sites in either area depending on which are the nearest.

The issue regarding site usage emerged in September 2024 with the proposed introduction of the booking systems for cars in Shropshire (a booking system for vans & trailers has always been in place) and Telford and Wrekin concern that this would encourage more of our residents to use their sites because they would not have to book.

A compromise was then agreed that their residents could still use Shropshire recycling centres but would need to use the booking system whilst Shropshire resident could continue to use their recycling centres as normal. The booking system at Shropshire recycling centres was only in place from November 2024 until January 2025, but it did provide us with detailed analysis of site usage indicating that up to 2500 visits per year where from Telford & Wrekin residents.

In October 2024 Telford & Wrekin made the decision to undertake a postcode survey at their sites, and from the information gathered they estimated that there where over 31,000 visits annually from Shropshire residents using their recycling sites although this is not a figure that is based on detailed analysis and a figure that we would dispute.

Officers from both councils discussed this again in September 2025 and the indication was that the present situation would be maintained.

However, without prior warning we receive an email on the 25 March 2026 to say that they had taken the decision to restrict access to their HRCs to residents of Telford and Wrekin only from the 1 April 2026 due to the cost of our residents using their sites which they have estimated at up to £200,000 again a figure that we would dispute.

We have informed our residents through media channels and updated our website however, at this moment in time residents from Telford & Wrekin can still visit our recycling centres and there are ongoing discussions between officers to find a solution/compromise at the earliest opportunity.