

MEMBER QUESTIONS COUNCIL 14 MAY 2026

1. Question from Councillor Beverley Waite

Would Council please report on progress made to date on the preparation of its Local Transport Plan 2026 – 2038 with reference to:

1. Engagement activities and
2. The key objectives being set for the Plan's short, medium and long-term goals.

Clarifying how and when active travel, a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan and 20's Plenty will be implemented as necessary throughout the county?

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

Quality transport choices are vital for all of our residents, whatever their age, and wherever they live. The next Local Transport Plan for Shropshire will set out the long-term strategy for the development, management and maintenance of Shropshire's highway and transport systems and will run to 2036. It will move decisively towards a vision led approach, rather than just reacting to trends.

Work on the new LTP was paused by the previous administration; we took the decision to restart this vital work very soon after the local elections. The work completed to date and a forward plan for the ongoing development of the next LTP was reviewed by Informal Cabinet in October 2025, we recognised the importance of having an up to date LTP, despite the long-standing absence of promised new guidance on LTPs from the Government. When the Government released details of the new multi-year Local Transport Consolidated Funding Settlement in December 2025, it placed a requirement on Local Transport Authorities to submit a Local Transport Delivery Plan setting how they planned to use the funding and that should be consistent with the priorities in their respective LTPs. If we had not taken the decision to restart work, Shropshire Council would have not been able to robustly set out its strategic highways and transport priorities. The Government finally published the new LTP guidance on 2nd April 2026. The Government recognises that at the time of publishing this guidance, some LTAs are in the process of updating their LTPs and these LTAs should take a proportionate approach to applying this new guidance to their LTPs. Officers are in the process of reviewing our draft LTP documents against the new guidance to ensure that they align as much as possible at this stage.

Cabinet is due to consider a recommendation to launch a full public consultation on the draft LTP in June. The consultation material will cover the strategic objectives and a series of actions areas, which will include active travel and road safety. The LTP will be supported by an Implementation Plan which covers the first five years of the LTP period. This will set out the interventions across all of the action areas required to deliver the strategy, alongside indicative costs and funding sources. Although currently in draft, interventions are likely to include a review of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the development of a speed management strategy for Shropshire that will cover all levels of speed restriction.

2. Question from Councillor Julian Dean

It was welcome news to see that the council has decided to both remove unauthorised flags from street lights and other highways assets and will seek to recover costs from those putting them up.

However, residents across the county continue to feel frustrated and annoyed that flags remain, and in some cases are being replaced, by a very small group of individuals. Can portfolio holders give an update on progress towards returning the counties highways to a less intrusive, divisive and at times dangerous state due to the unauthorised flags?

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

Thank you for raising this important issue. As an administration we do share your concerns and are taking this very seriously.

To reiterate, across our communities we recognise, there are a range of views about the flags; as a Council we respect these different views. Our aim as a Council is to balance these different views while keeping our residents and public spaces safe, respectful and compliant with policy.

We therefore have made our position on flags clear: We support the Union Flag. Putting up the Union Flag is not a hate crime and we have never suggested that it is. What we DO NOT however, support, is the unauthorised attachment of flags or any other objects to street lighting columns, highway infrastructure or other public street furniture due to health and safety issues, damage and costs to residents, nor do we support or tolerate the abuse of our staff and members.

Permission is required before attaching anything to council property, and we know many residents assume this is the case. In particular, it should be noted that the

unauthorised affixing of any signage or other similar item to the highway or highway structure can be deemed as a criminal offence; we are looking to prosecute but this takes time to gather and prepare evidence including historical evidence from a period of up to six months.

Removing flags is not normal Council business, it is not a statutory service and therefore it comes at an additional cost to the Council and its residents, depending on the number and location of flags. But we plan to remove all unauthorised flags from our street lighting columns and other highway assets. This will be in Shrewsbury initially with plans to remove all unauthorised flags across the county in time.

Unfortunately, directly linked to the removal of unauthorised flags, we are also seeing a rise in reports of abuse, harassment and intimidation directly at our residents, staff (including our contractors), and at individual local councillors. Staff and members are being threatened for explaining the Councils position, when they attempt to remove any unauthorised flags, and now even in day-to-day work to repair street lighting. Understandably staff, contractors and members, along with the public, are concerned and we take their safety seriously. We cannot condone or support this action.

However, to be open: this has directly impacted on the pace with which we can remove the flags.

We would like to take this opportunity to say this abuse is not acceptable and will not be ignored. In the case of Intimation, harassment or abuse where a criminal offence is being committed, we have in these instances, strongly encouraged reporting directly to the police so they can be properly recorded and assessed:

- Call 101 (non-emergency) or report online at www.westmercia.police.uk
- Report via True Vision (for hate crime) – www.report-it.org.uk
- Call 999 in an emergency if there is an immediate danger to life, or violence is being used or threatened

We remain committed to working with partners to remove the flags and to do this in a safe manner for staff and residents.

3. Question from Councillor Brian Evans

Cornovii Developments was created by the previous Conservative administration with ambitious promises on housing delivery, social value and financial return, all underwritten by very substantial council borrowing and presented to residents as realistic and deliverable.

Since then, those promises have been repeatedly revised, with reduced delivery forecasts, altered tenure assumptions and frequent reference to “viability challenges” and “market conditions”.

Given that the original Cornovii model, borrowing exposure and business-case assumptions were set entirely by the former Conservative administration, and that Shropshire Council’s finances are now under severe strain, can the Leader or relevant Portfolio Holder state plainly:

- which specific assumptions in the original Cornovii business case have failed, and why.
- whether the current Liberal Democrat administration accepts that repeated claims of “viability issues” indicate a fundamental weakness in the inherited delivery model rather than short-term economic turbulence; and
- what decisive action has been taken since coming into office to challenge, constrain or fundamentally reset that model, rather than simply re-profiling targets and adjusting expectations.

Residents are not asking for reassurance or political blame-shifting. They want honesty about what was promised, why those promises are being revised, who bears the risk when “viability” fails, and how the council intends to avoid managing decline in a company funded by council taxpayers.

Repeatedly revising targets may be administratively convenient, but it does not address the core public concern: whether optimism has been allowed to replace realism in the stewardship of public money.

Response from Councillor James Owen, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure

Thank you for the question.

CDL was established as a wholly-owned company to deliver new homes, including affordable housing, and to generate a return to the General Fund. The original business case relied on assumptions about land values, build costs, sales values, interest rates and delivery pace that have since been materially affected by sustained build cost inflation, higher borrowing costs and slower sales rates.

These impacts have been reported through successive Housing Supervisory Board and Cabinet reports.

The current administration has been clear that the position requires more than reprofiled targets. A full, thorough review of CDL has been underway for a while

now, at the request of myself and senior Council officers, and a report setting out options for the future of the company will be considered by Cabinet in July 2026.

The analysis of options for CDL will be published as part of the report and there will be the opportunity for residents and members to gain further clarity on the steps that the Council is taking to actively review the company.

Finally, I wish to highlight the additional Housing Scrutiny panel being proposed later in this meeting, of which CDL will fall under. This is the result of a push by this administration to ensure more open and transparent scrutiny of this area by Council that we believe has been sorely lacking for years, especially over the course of CDL's lifetime.

4. Question from Councillor Carl Rowley

Is now the time for a common-sense, seasonal approach to flying flags along town-centre roads, working with community groups to ensure the proper use of street furniture, respect for public assets, and the prominent display of flags reflecting our country, county and heritage, including the Union Flag, St George's Flag and the Shropshire colour, as well as other flags that relate to our heritage and community groups during British Summer Time, when this can best support town-centre trade, tourism and civic pride, without unnecessary cost or damage?

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

Thank you for your question.

In the previous response to Cllr Dean, I explained in detail the Council's policy on the unauthorised attachment of flags to lighting columns and the challenges the Council faces in enforcing this policy.

Just to make absolutely clear we do not support the unauthorised attachment of flags or any other objects to street lighting columns, highway infrastructure or other public street furniture due to health and safety issues, damage, and costs to residents; nor do we support or tolerate the abuse of our staff and members.

In addition, we have been working with partners and have put a bid into the Home Office for funds to support engagement with all our communities around community safety and cohesion issues. We have also requested funds to support the development of local flags, designed for and with our communities, including our young people, that relate to our heritage and communities. These flags to be put up alongside the appropriate display of the Union Flag and St George's Flag.

5. Question from Councillor Rosemary Dartnall

Shrewsbury Movement and Public Open Space Strategy (Shrewsbury Moves) is designed to improve our county town. It will remove the negative impact of through-traffic, boost our local economy and provide a more pleasant environment for all who live in, work in and visit Shrewsbury. The strategy relies on some people choosing alternative ways of getting around, such as bus travel, walking and cycling. For these positive changes to come about, for people to be willing to reduce car use, Shropshire Council must provide alternatives that are efficient and affordable.

It's obvious that an improved bus network, including Sunday services, is needed. A wide-ranging network of safe walking and cycling routes must also be available. Bus travel, walking and cycling must be more convenient and cheaper than private car travel in order to encourage meaningful change.

Fortunately, the government has provided improved bus funding from 2024/25, with both capital and revenue allocations, provided up to 2028/29.

- How will this funding improve bus travel in Shropshire and in Shrewsbury?
- What are the plans to provide strong growth in public transport, and safe walking and cycling infrastructure, so that Shrewsbury Moves can be successfully implemented?
- When will meaningful action take place?

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

I must start with a correction. In last financial year Shropshire Council had £3,073,316 to make improvements to and to support our bus network across the whole county. This funding has been reduced by the Government to £2,866,650 for this year and the following two years.

Shrewsbury already has the most comprehensive bus network in the county, and whilst I agree that we want to see improvements, improving bus services in isolation, without addressing root problems is unlikely to be a successful or cost-effective option. London has the best bus services in the country in terms of frequency, hours of operation and cost, yet they are seeing a drop off in usage due to congestion in the capital. Contrast that with Oxford, where the county council has introduced bus priority measures in the city, and as a result the bus operators themselves are investing more because of increased patronage.

This is why the Movement & Public Space Strategy is important for Shrewsbury and for Shropshire, it has laid out a series of options for addressing congestion, improving access to the centre of our county town by all modes of transport. The MPSS is a car plan, a bus plan, a walking plan and a cycling plan.

To answer the specific questions:

- *Improving bus travel with reduced funding from the government will be difficult.*
- *Growth in public transport, and safe walking and cycling infrastructure cannot and should not be viewed in isolation from the MPSS – they are two sides of the same coin.*
- *Council officers are in the process of determining how the key features of the MPSS can be modelled, options chosen based on that evidence, funded and implemented. Further details on this should be available later this year.*

6. Question from Councillor Elizabeth Barker

Following the community cohesion meeting held in Albrighton on 23 April about the Afghan families housed at Cosford, concerns remain about the clarity of the information provided. Residents were told that 25 families are currently housed there, but when asked how many individuals this represents, no answer could be given. There was also conflicting information about how long families will remain at Cosford and whether any further placements may be made in future.

Can the Cabinet Member clearly set out Shropshire Council's plans for the Afghan resettlement scheme, confirm how many individuals are currently housed at Cosford, and clarify whether those housed there will be classed as homeless and how long they are expected to remain on camp before being found settled accommodation can he also clarify how much this will cost the taxpayers of Shropshire.

Response from Councillor James Owen, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure

The Afghan Resettlement Scheme is the responsibility of the Home Office, and not Shropshire Council.

There are currently 24 households living in SFA (service family accommodation) on the Cosford site. This equates to 52 adults and 71 children. Any specific requests relating to future households should be directed to the Home Office.

The resettlement team is currently working with families who have been housed by the Home Office on the Cosford site to secure alternative accommodation before their 3-year placement ends to avoid them becoming homeless. The date the initial cohort of families must leave the site is November 2026.

No money for the Afghan Resettlement Scheme comes from Shropshire Council. The resettlement team within Shropshire Council and any support provided to the families is funded out of ring-fenced grants provided by central government solely for this purpose.

