

CABINET – 9 SEPTEMBER 2026

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

1. Councillor Kate Halliday

Barnsley Council and Barnsley Hospital have attracted national attention through their "Health on the High Street" initiative, which has relocated outpatient and diagnostic services into town centre shopping developments. Reported benefits include improved patient access, easier parking, reduced pressure on hospital sites, increased town centre footfall and additional support for local businesses. Barnsley's model is now expected to generate over 100,000 health-related visits per year and has been described as an example for other towns to follow. Given that officers have identified health uses as one of the mixed-use options being considered for the Smithfield Riverside site, can the Cabinet Member advise:

1. Whether Shropshire Council has held, or plans to hold, discussions with the NHS, the Integrated Care Board, Community Health Trusts or other healthcare providers regarding the potential location of outpatient, diagnostic, wellbeing or community health services within the Riverside development?
2. Whether the success of Barnsley's "Health on the High Street" model has been reviewed as part of the Riverside masterplanning process?
3. What assessment has been made of the potential benefits that health facilities could bring to both residents and the long-term viability of the Riverside regeneration project?

Given the well-documented challenges around access to healthcare, hospital parking and town centre vitality, would Cabinet support exploring health provision as a key component of the future Riverside development?

2. Councillor Malcolm Myles-Hook

Whitchurch Civic Centre has now been closed for three years.

Today's Cabinet report confirms that the £4 million figure was a planning assumption, rather than an approved capital allocation. Consequently, the previous Conservative administration neither identified nor set aside the funding required to deliver the necessary works. The project therefore remained unfunded and was unable to progress beyond the options appraisal and assessment stage.

The report also makes clear that the Council's deteriorating financial position has prevented further progress. Following the declaration of a financial emergency, and with the authority operating under Exceptional Financial Support and a Best Value Notice, the Council is no longer in a position to fund a major capital

investment of this scale. The CIPFA report sets out in detail the serious financial circumstances inherited by the current administration and is essential reading for residents across the county.

- Will Cabinet actively encourage expressions of interest from local organisations, including Save Our Civic, that may be able to take responsibility for this vital community asset?
- Will the Council support Whitchurch Town Council, the local market and community organisations that may need to relocate if the entire site closes?
- Will the Council work closely with local ward councillor Andy Hall, whose tireless advocacy alongside community partners over the past three years has kept the future of this valued community space firmly on the agenda, and support his efforts to identify suitable alternative accommodation and practical assistance for affected Whitchurch businesses and organisations?

3. Councillor Jamie Daniels

Residents of Weir Hill have now waited years for infrastructure and environmental obligations secured through the Section 106 agreement associated with the development to be delivered. A number of these obligations remain outstanding, despite the development being substantially built and occupied.

Given that these are legal obligations entered into by the developers, rather than voluntary commitments, what is preventing Shropshire Council from taking formal enforcement action to compel compliance with the Section 106 agreement, and at what point will the Council conclude that negotiation has failed and use the legal enforcement powers available to it?