**Economy & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**12th November 2026**

**Member Questions and Responses**

## Question from Councillor Thomas Clayton:

Could the Task and Finish Group explore whether Shropshire Council could introduce a sponsorship scheme for highway verges and other roadside green spaces, including grass verges, roundabouts, hedges and shrubbery, traffic islands, flower beds, planters, gateway areas, street trees and other areas of highway landscaping?

Under such a scheme, local businesses could contribute towards the cost of more regular maintenance in return for a small, appropriately designed sponsorship sign. The aim would be to secure additional funding to improve the appearance and maintenance of these areas without placing the full additional cost on the Council.

There is precedent elsewhere. North Yorkshire Council offers roundabout and verge sponsorship, allowing businesses to advertise at locations across the county while supporting public amenities and services. Lincolnshire County Council has a specific policy covering sponsorship and advertising on roundabouts and verges, where sponsorship funding can support maintenance and planting. Its policy allows licences of up to five years, subject to highway safety standards and the necessary planning approval. Leeds City Council also offers sponsorship opportunities across parks and green spaces, with businesses acknowledged through signage.

Could the Group therefore investigate whether a similar model could work in Shropshire, including the potential income, likely demand from local businesses, administration costs, planning and highway safety requirements, and whether money raised could be ring-fenced to provide additional or more frequent maintenance of the sponsored area.

## Response:

As part of the Economy and Environment scrutiny committee we have established a task and finish group to help shape the future highways contract.

Each of Shropshire's 80 roundabouts were surveyed five years ago by our Highways Advertising service provider Outdo. Unfortunately all five in Shifnal were either considered not suitable by Outdo or were refused planning and therefore have not been able to be part of the scheme.

Officers have recently asked the planning manager about the possibility of resubmitting some applications for the many roundabouts that were refused. I was advised that having received officer recommendation for refusal at the time, she couldn't see any reason for a change of outcome.

The roundabouts in Shifnal which I refer to are:

A464 Priorslee Road – National Highways owned not SC

Priorslee Road/A4169 Innage Road/Victoria Road – Parish Council objection received. Asked to withdraw by planning

A4169 Innage Road/Church Street – Parish Council objection received. Asked to withdraw by planning

A464/Hough Way – Asked to withdraw, not adopted by the council at that time, still with the developer

Springhill/Aston Road/National Cycle Route 81 – Asked to withdraw, not adopted by the council at that time, still with the developer

Several grass verges and flower beds (high traffic locations mainly in Shrewsbury) were also looked at as part of the scheme, but were refused planning.

The rest of the scheme runs smoothly and produces good income for Shropshire Council.

**Question from Councillor Dawn Husemann:**

What formal mechanism will be put in place to ensure that local members' knowledge of their divisions and residents' priorities genuinely influences the prioritisation of highway repairs and other works, rather than members simply being informed after priorities have already been decided?

**Response:**

The service is committed to building closer links with communities and providing greater visibility of planned work within individual wards.

A significant proportion of our work is statutory and governed by our highways policy. This means we must act within specific timescales to address safety issues, such as pothole repairs. As these programmes are dynamic and subject to change, providing advance notice can be challenging. However, for other types of work, we recognise there is greater scope to engage with communities and ensure local priorities help inform our plans. It is worth mentioning that general repair priority takes account of the volume of enquiries and therefore reflects effectively demand from the public.

We also recognise that some roads and locations are of greater local importance than others. Like all highway authorities, we must follow the Department for Transport's guidance when prioritising investment in order to secure the maximum level of funding for Shropshire, in particular this means having a strategic approach to managing highway infrastructure and this is set out in our asset management strategy. Local engagement is an important part of this process and is reflected in the ongoing service restructure, which is increasing resources to strengthen and support engagement with communities.

The recently revised Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy reinforces this commitment. It sets out our intention to work with communities to define a network that better reflects how places are connected, enabling the Council to focus

investment on the parts of the network that provide the greatest value to local communities.

**Question from Councillor Peter Husemann:**

Members deal directly with residents' frustration about pothole and patching repairs, including poor-quality repairs, repeat visits and concerns about value for money. Yet I understand the procurement process for the new contract is already under way without meaningful member input into the specification.

What specific opportunity will members have, before detailed tenders are invited, to influence the quality standards, durability requirements, inspection regime and performance measures in the new contract?

And will you guarantee that this happens early enough for our input to actually change the specification, rather than simply being a consultation after the important decisions have already been taken?

**Response:**

The Council continually monitors the quality of highway repairs through inspections, performance data and photographic evidence. Of the more than 35,000 enquiries received by the highways service each year, around 4% relate specifically to the quality of works.

The new repairs and patching contract strengthens both quality and value for money. It moves away from predominantly paying for a gang by the day towards paying for completed repairs, incentivising productive output. This is balanced by a rigorous specification requiring permanent, right-first-time repairs, with bidders specifically assessed on how they will deliver quality and durability.

The contractor will remain responsible for permanent repairs for 24 months. Performance against repair response times will be measured monthly against a 98% target and 95% threshold, with improvement measures and financial deductions for underperformance. The new contract also places liability with the contractor for relevant losses and third-party claims arising from its failure to inspect, repair or make safe defects within the required timescales, backed by £20 million Public Liability Insurance.

Taken together, these changes respond directly to concerns around repeat repairs, quality and value for money by creating a much clearer link between what the Council pays for, the work delivered and the quality achieved. For the forthcoming larger highways term-maintenance procurement, wider engagement with Members and parish and town councils is also being planned.