Economy & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

12th November 2026

Public Questions and Responses

Question from Gwyneth Hinkins:

When considering the road closures to enable the Hills Ford Stages rally to go ahead please could the Committee ask why Shropshire Council's Cabinet not break down the voting into sections rather than as a whole? For example:

1) Holding the rally in Shropshire
2) Road closure for Clee Hill Stage
3) Road closure for the Cressage stage
4) Road closure for the Lawley stage
5) Road closure for the Dorrington stage
6) Road closure for the Linley Stage

This would have enabled Highways and the Cabinet to thoroughly investigate the pros and cons of holding the rally, permitting the road closures in specific areas, allowing proper consultation with Parish Councils, businesses, organisations such as Shropshire Hills National Landscape, environmental issues, farmers, residents and tourism organisations. If Shropshire Council are asked to permit such a rally in the future I would suggest using this voting format.

Also:

Motor Sport UK advised:

Quote:

"Just because a Motor Race Order has been issued, it does not mean the specified roads and closure times are set in stone. Amendments can be made if appropriated and it is the local authorities who have the final say with these matters".

Response:

Please refer to the recording of the meeting for the response (at 1:03:11) from Councillor Tom Dainty (Deputy Portfolio Holder for Flooding and Highways).

Question from Rob Weston:

It is understood that the decision to permit the Hills Ford Stages rally to take place in Shropshire in September 2026 was made by the council in consideration of claimed; significant (but unsubstantiated) financial benefits netted for the County. Thus, the decision was made in favour of projected fiscal gain, overriding concerns made by various PC's, SC, environmental bodies, local-residents and the public. As the decision by SC was irrefutably made in favour of the promise of financial benefits, it should also

indisputably be set out and accounted clearly for the public to see. My question concerns transparency of the overall fiscal result, facts and figures. I would ask;

a) How were the stated financial benefits categorised and calculated.
b) Is there a breakdown available showing the income and figures concerned.
c) Have the expenses incurred by hosting the event, e.g. Emergency services, highways, etc. been summed, documented and made available to the public.
d) What was the overall profit raised for the County by accommodating the event.

Response:

(a) The anticipated economic benefits were estimated broadly by reference to experience from comparable events held elsewhere. These figures were presented as estimates rather than confirmed outcomes. As this was the first time the event had taken place in Shropshire, the actual economic benefits could not be established in advance.

(b) The report provided by Matt Potts sets out further information on the financial figures and economic benefits associated with the event.

(c) The organisers arranged their own medical provision and directly engaged a dedicated police resource. We are therefore unable to confirm the costs incurred by those organisations or whether their involvement was cost-neutral.

In relation to highway maintenance, no preparatory expenditure was incurred, and the organisers agreed to make good any damage attributable to the event. No deterioration attributable to the event has been reported, and no associated highway maintenance expenditure has therefore been incurred.

The principal costs to the Council relate to the preparation and processing of the legal orders and officer time. Officer time has not been separately quantified. The planning and preparation of the orders took place over a relatively short period, with the majority of officer time devoted to consultation and responding to public enquiries and representations.

The cost of the legal order was just under £10,000.

(d) The reports provided by Shrewsbury BID and Matt Potts set out the information available on the economic benefits associated with the event.

The anticipated economic benefits were estimates and were one of several considerations informing the decision to approve the event. They were not the sole basis for that decision.

The potential benefits to Shropshire's hospitality and tourism sectors were considered alongside environmental matters, the impact on residents and businesses, and the opportunity for families and motorsport enthusiasts to attend the event. It was recognised that an event of this scale would inevitably cause some disruption, and the decision involved balancing those impacts against the potential benefits and opportunities for the county.

Question from Peter Phillips:

MEMBERS know there is support in for the Rally ; and some strong views against. As a compromise, I invite Committee to

Recommend...that for future events, there be a Presumption against using the Shropshire Hills National Landscape .....

The rallyists' require for difficult lanes, bends ,etc...There's an abundance of 'challenging' roads across Shropshire(!) , with no need to use the NL.....Doubtless,in reviewing the event, Hillsford will be amenable to amendments.

The NL is designated To protect Nature,Farming, Tranquillity. Landscape,etc. Visitors--and tourism is important--come for those experiences, tranquillity being increasingly rare today . .... walkers,cyclists,equestrians,naturalists...school parties and Duke of Edinburghs. These would be deterred if our NL had a reputation for rallies. September, is an important month for 'quiet tourism.'..for more senior citizens ! The Bog Centre and Long Mynd Shuttle operate to the end of the month.

Council approved the event for Economic Benefit to the County. It's unlikely this would be hit were routes changed

Today's recommendations are significant in setting future conditions : re-visiting could be difficult

Response:

Please refer to the recording of the meeting for the response (at 1:09:47) from Councillor Ed Potter (Chairman of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee).