CABINET – 18 NOVEMBER 2026

RESPONSES TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. John Palmer

The COVID-19 Inquiry Module 1 Report published on 18 July 2024 by Chair Heather Hallett examined emergency preparedness, resilience and response.

One of the 10 recommendations was holding a mandatory UK-wide pandemic response exercise at least once every 3 years, and publishing the lessons learned.

Exercise Pegasus concluded on 5 November 2025: Shropshire Council was involved via the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum.

Why is there no information on Shropshire Council's website about how prepared Shropshire Council is judged to be, following this exercise?

Have Cabinet got their eye on the ball?

Response:

Shropshire Council was an active participant in Exercise Pegasus through the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum, alongside local authorities, the NHS, UK Health Security Agency, police, fire and ambulance services, NHS trusts and other partners.

Exercise Pegasus was a national exercise led by government and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), with the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum playing a significant role in its local delivery. Shropshire Council participated as part of this wider multi-agency response, reflecting the coordinated approach that would be required during a pandemic across government, public health, the NHS, emergency services, local government, social care, voluntary and community organisations, businesses and other infrastructure providers.

The exercise was designed to test these collective arrangements rather than assess individual organisations. It will therefore not provide Shropshire Council with an individual preparedness rating.

Shropshire Council also works with its Local Resilience Forum partners on winter preparedness and exercising activity. The Council's current Major

Incident Plan sets out its command-and-control, communications and recovery arrangements, and has recently been reviewed by the Council's Leadership Board.

The national evaluation of Exercise Pegasus is expected in winter 2026. Once published, its findings and lessons will be considered by the Council and its partners and incorporated into local arrangements where appropriate.

There is therefore no individual Pegasus assessment of Shropshire Council to publish on the Council's website. Emergency preparedness remains subject to ongoing planning, exercising and review through the Council and the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum.

2. David Kilby, on behalf of Shropshire Playing Fields Association

    1. If S.P.F.A produce the necessary evidence demonstrating a need for the two court sports pitch area at the Shirehall Site Shrewsbury, will Shropshire Council listen to the evidence and withdraw their intent to sell the two court sports pitch area?

    2. At a previous meeting of the cabinet (14 July 2026) S.P.F.A asked: Whether the whole sports area is currently protected from future development, by way of a covenant or deed of dedication?

        The Council failed to provide a response to this question, could they please do so now?

Response:

1. The Council will consider all relevant evidence and comments from everyone including of course the views of key stakeholders as it progresses proposals for the site. Officers are currently engaging with the trustees of the Shropshire Unison Sports and Social Club regarding the future requirements of the club and playing fields, including access, parking and the former tennis-court area. My present understanding is that the former tennis courts have not been operational as tennis courts for a significant period. They are currently included within the area being considered as part of the wider Shirehall disposal proposals. Any evidence submitted by the Shropshire Playing Fields Association will be considered alongside the Council’s property, planning, legal and financial responsibilities before the final disposal arrangements are implemented.

2. The Council has undertaken a review of the title documentation relating to Shirehall. That review confirms that a number of covenants, easements, rights and other title obligations affect different parts of the site. In particular, a deed dated 17 October 1961 affects part of the land and requires the land identified in that deed to be maintained as a playing field. It also restricts the erection of buildings other than buildings associated with playing-field use. These title matters will be taken fully into account when determining the extent and terms of any disposal. The principal Unison Club playing fields do not form part of the current Shirehall disposal area.

3. Jonathan Owen, Save our Shirehall

What timescale is anticipated to achieve best value and complete a sale? e.g. issue of invitations / receipt and evaluation / deadline for proposals / negotiations with a preferred purchaser and discharge of conditions?

Response:

The Council is seeking to progress the disposal as quickly as reasonably practicable while ensuring that the site is properly prepared for marketing and that the Council meets its statutory obligation to secure best consideration.

The current programme provides for:

Cabinet consideration of the disposal prospectus in November 2026; completion of material due diligence and continued discussions with Homes England during November and December 2026;

a decision by 31 December 2026 on whether an advantageous Homes England-supported route should be pursued or a national property agent appointed;

completion of the remaining data-room, archive and decommissioning activities and implementation of the chosen route in early 2027;

a market exercise, anticipated to include an initial expression-of-interest stage followed by the submission and evaluation of detailed proposals; and

selection and approval of a preferred purchaser, followed by the negotiation and discharge of any necessary contractual, planning or other conditions. The precise period between marketing, selection of a preferred purchaser, exchange of contracts and completion cannot be fixed before proposals are

received. It will depend upon the nature of the bids, any conditions attached to them and the time required to secure the necessary approvals. The disposal is currently included within the Council's 2027/28 disposal pipeline.

4. Jane Gallagher, Save our Shirehall

   Will the EoI invitation make reference to a possible leaseback to the Council?

   Response:

   The Shirehall property proposed for disposal has been declared surplus to the Council's operational requirements. There is therefore no current intention to lease any part of the property back to the Council. The final structure of the marketing exercise and the detailed requirements of the prospectus remain subject to Cabinet's decision and the completion of the necessary technical, legal and commercial preparations.

5. John Crowe, Save our Shirehall

   Will any sale include the Unison Club playing fields and Shirehall overflow carpark on London Road?

   Response:

   No. The current Shirehall disposal does not include the Shropshire Unison Sports and Social Club playing fields. Those areas were not included within the land previously agreed as surplus, and discussions with the Club regarding its longer-term requirements are continuing separately. The Shirehall overflow car park on London Road is also being considered separately and does not form part of the current Shirehall disposal proposal.