CABINET – 18 NOVEMBER 2026

RESPONSES TO MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

1. Councillor Teri Trickett

Improving Disabled Parking Provision in Shropshire's Town Centres

I welcome the emphasis on accessibility and inclusive transport within the draft Shropshire Local Transport Plan 2027–2037, particularly the recognition that transport provision must meet the needs of all residents.

I also note that Section 12.1 of the recent Shropshire Traffic Management and Parking Consultation report acknowledges that many disabled residents rely on private vehicles and suggests that a review of disabled parking provision should be considered following any network changes.

Whilst I recognise that Blue Badge holders benefit from free on-street parking, the availability of suitably located designated disabled parking spaces is equally important, particularly for those with significant mobility difficulties.

Improving accessibility to our town centres is vitally important for disabled people's independence and their ability to access shops and essential services.

Could Cabinet commit to prioritising a review of disabled parking provision across Shropshire and ensure that, as part of this work, suitable locations are actively identified within Shrewsbury and our other market towns where additional designated disabled parking bays could be introduced?

Response:

Thank you for the question, Councillor Trickett regarding improved disabled parking provision in our towns.

Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) must comply with statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make "reasonable adjustments" and the Public Sector Equality Duty. As part of the Department for Transport's new approach to allocating funding to LTAs, there are expectations around the adoption of inclusive policy making and embedding active consideration of accessibility within the development and delivery of policies funded through the new funding settlement. Once requirement is to identify an "Accessibility Group" to advise officers and elected officials on the

transport and mobility needs of disabled people, to support authorities to deliver policy which is responsive to the needs of disabled transport users. Officers will be working to establish this in 2027.

Disabled access would mainly fall under two of the draft LTP's objectives:

- Health and Wellbeing: To ensure transport has a positive impact on people's health, wellbeing, and social inclusion by making journeys safe and secure, facilitating active lifestyles, and reducing harmful transport emissions.
- Connecting to opportunities: To provide a user-friendly, affordable, and accessible transport network and reliable digital connectivity that connects people and organisations to the amenities, services, and opportunities that they need.

Demand Management Action 7.1 of the draft LTP is to review and update the Council's Parking Strategy to align with new policy, aspirations, and improvement plans. It particularly cites that the strategy will cover "the optimal location and number of disabled bays across urban and rural areas.

2. Councillor Adam Fejfer

I warmly welcome the excellent news regarding the introduction of new evening bus services, which is a fantastic step forward for our local economy and public transport accessibility.

Building on this positive momentum, I would like to ask if the Council's ongoing review of local bus services might look at expanding these evening connections to further areas, particularly the No. 1 and No. 23 routes serving Monkmoor Ward.

Additionally, following recent route adjustments, some residents around Porchfield have noticed a gap in their usual connections. To help support them, could the review also explore minor route adaptations to restore this local connectivity? In particular, including the highly popular Woodcote Way stop would be incredibly beneficial for residents in that neighborhood.

Response:

Thank you for your question, Councillor Fejfer, and for welcoming the new evening services at Oxon and Harlescott Park & Ride.

It is worth recognising that Shropshire Council withdrew funding for the majority of evening and Sunday services in 2011. The new administration would like to restore these, but must do so in a responsible and measured way. These two services are the start of delivering on that ambition. The main constraint remains the ongoing cost of providing additional journeys, so the council must demonstrate demand so it is able to accurately predict overall costs.

Considering the individual services.

Service 1, including the sections serving Porchfield and Woodcote Way, is operated commercially by Arriva Midlands. Its route, timetable and any potential evening provision are therefore matters for Arriva to determine. The Council cannot direct changes to a commercial service, but we will pass your suggestions to the operator for consideration.

Service 23 is supported and contracted by the Council. Any evening extension would need to be assessed alongside the needs of other supported services across Shropshire and would depend on passenger demand and affordable funding being available.

We welcome the ambition behind the proposal, but we cannot commit to additional evening journeys at this stage.

3. Councillor Jamie Daniels

In October 2025, Cabinet acknowledge that Shropshire Council did not have a sufficiently positive complaint-handling culture and committed to improvement, oversight and greater transparency.

Against that commitment, will Cabinet provide the following Council-wide information:

a. For statutory children's services complaints, how many Stage 2 complaints are currently outstanding beyond 25 working days and beyond the maximum 65-working-day timescale, what is the longest outstanding case, and what action is being taken to eliminate the backlog?
b. How many complaints made directly by children or young people are currently outstanding, including requests to progress to Stage 2, and what arrangements ensure that children can exercise their statutory complaints rights effectively?
c. What is the Council's policy where disputed information in children's social care or SEND records is subject to a rectification request while a complaint

is outstanding, and what safeguards prevent potentially inaccurate information continuing to influence decision-making?

d. Given the reported increase in use of the Council's Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Customers procedure, what analysis has Cabinet undertaken of the reasons for that increase, including whether delays in responding to residents generate additional correspondence, and will Cabinet commission independent scrutiny of its use?
e. What measurable and independently verified improvements in complaint handling have been achieved since Cabinet's October 2025 commitment to cultural change?

Response:

In October 2025, Cabinet acknowledge that Shropshire Council did not have a sufficiently positive complaint-handling culture and committed to improvement, oversight and greater transparency.

Against that commitment, will Cabinet provide the following Council-wide information:

a. For statutory children's services complaints, how many Stage 2 complaints are currently outstanding beyond 25 working days and beyond the maximum 65-working-day timescale, what is the longest outstanding case, and what action is being taken to eliminate the backlog?

   As at 27th October:
   How many children's statutory Stage 2 complaints are currently outstanding beyond 25 working days?
   Three

   How many children's statutory complaints are beyond the maximum 65-working-day timescale?
   Three

   What is the longest outstanding children's statutory case?
   Where a statement of complaint was signed on the 08/07/2025.

   What action is being taken to eliminate the backlog?
   2 cases are delayed with an external investigator. This delay is not directly caused by Shropshire Council.

b. How many complaints made directly by children or young people are currently outstanding, including requests to progress to Stage 2, and what

arrangements ensure that children can exercise their statutory complaints rights effectively?
All complaints by children and young people have been progressed in line with relevant procedure other than 2 complaints made by an adult with communication restrictions in place under the Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Customers Procedure.

c. What is the Council's policy where disputed information in children's social care or SEND records is subject to a rectification request while a complaint is outstanding, and what safeguards prevent potentially inaccurate information continuing to influence decision-making?
The general Data Protection Policy is available from the Shropshire Council website: sc-data-protection-policy-2026.pdf. There is no policy specifically about records subject to rectification while a complaint is active. However, the complaints team and relevant manager will liaise with Information Governance where a complaint is made and there is a suggestion that information relevant to the complaint is incorrect. This can then be considered during decision making, where appropriate.

d. Given the reported increase in use of the Council's Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Customers procedure, what analysis has Cabinet undertaken of the reasons for that increase, including whether delays in responding to residents generate additional correspondence, and will Cabinet commission independent scrutiny of its use?

Cabinet regularly review the Council's performance and will always looks to improve processes where possible. There are clear reasons, set out in the report, which detail the national backdrop of increasing complaints, the increased use of AI – turning what are effectively simply complaints into ones which require significant Officer time to respond to. As a result, the Council applies its unreasonably persistent and vexatious customer behaviour policy where appropriate to ensure that its resources are used proportionately. For example, a complainant making substantially the same complaint repeatedly, over an extended period of time, to multiple officers and members requires a significant level of resource which ultimately elongates the timescales for responses. The Council's number of restrictions (31 over the past 12 months against a population of circa 333,000 residents,) compares favourably with other local authorities.

e. What measurable and independently verified improvements in complaint handling have been achieved since Cabinet's October 2025 commitment to cultural change?

Shropshire Council works in line with national guidance statutory complaints (adults and Children's) and corporate complaints (the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's complaint handling code). Progress against code implementation is reported annually within the Customer Feedback report available to the public in approximately September each year and is specifically considered by Cabinet, including whether any refinements or improvements can be made to the process.

4. Councillor Brendan Mallon

Shrewsbury Castle has been home to the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum for more than 40 years, but with its lease due to expire in May, there is growing concern among residents across the county about what the future holds for the museum and its collection. The museum's presence in the castle has been a very successful fit, enhancing the appeal of the site. The Shropshire regiments have a storied history and it would seem highly appropriate for the museum to remain in this iconic location into the future.

The suggestion that the castle could instead become a wedding venue makes little commercial or practical sense. It has no commercial catering facilities, limited parking, no on-site accommodation and difficult access, while the town centre's noise restrictions would also limit what could realistically take place in the evenings. To sacrifice an established museum and stake the future of such an important historic building on a speculative business proposition, particularly at a time when the hospitality sector is already struggling, would be reckless.

It is unfortunate that this threat to Shropshire's military heritage is emerging during Armistice Week and urgent clarity is required on the following questions:

Will Cabinet commit to return the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum to Shrewsbury Castle after the planned building works, on a new lease?

Who will take the decision on the lease and will it be published in advance as a key decision?

Will the council publish the options appraisal for Shrewsbury Castle that it commissioned in 2023?

Response:

The Soldiers of Shropshire Museum, operated by a charitable trust, has proudly occupied Shrewsbury Castle since 1985. It showcases collections that celebrate the history of Shropshire's regiments and the modern army, distinct from the Castle's own unique heritage.

With the current lease due to expire in 2027, Shropshire Council is undertaking a review of the site's future use. This includes exploring commercial and heritage opportunities, the long-term financial viability of the status quo, and is focused on ensuring the Castle remains a vibrant civic landmark. It serves as the proud gateway to Shrewsbury, a fantastic tourist attraction and a wonderfully atmospheric venue for cultural events; we need to recognise and build on this.

That said, the Castle is not without challenges that need a solution. We are currently having to spend £1.8 million on works to stabilise the crenelations and effect heritage repairs, with more internal works required in the near future. This has already meant that we cannot run the Summer 2027 programme of cultural events as these works will be intrusive, and necessitate closures for a period of time.

The review will help identify the scope and scale of future works required to protect the Castle going forward. In the Council's financial emergency, we will need to ensure that the investment does not just protect the asset for future generations but also makes it a sustainable and viable asset for the future.

As a result, we are currently in the process of commissioning an expert independent reviewer to consider the range of options for the castle. The brief will include an opportunity for stakeholders to be engaged in the process and talk to the reviewers directly about their views and opinions on the future options for the castle.

Any and all elected members interested in this opportunity are invited to make contact with Officers. This work will seek to build on, and test assumptions from previous work undertaken. Once this exercise has concluded, all viable options will be considered for the future use of Shrewsbury Castle by Cabinet in due course.

The council is also working collaboratively with the Soldiers of Shropshire Trustees and Director, with regular meetings taking place. We thank them for the commitment to continued dialogue as we work through this process.

We appreciate the importance of providing clarity on the Castle's future and we will continue to work with the Soldiers of Shropshire Trust as they continue

to consider and refine their business plan and explore future possibilities - whether at Shrewsbury Castle or a suitable alternative location.

Further updates will be shared as this work progresses.

5. Councillor Donna Edmunds

During public question time at Cabinet on 9th September 2026, Cabinet was asked about the £4 million loss on Cornovii. In response, the Cabinet said that "lessons must be learned from this experience."

1. Can the Council leader please detail precisely the lessons the council has learned so far from this experience, and what it intends to do differently going forward to mitigate against such losses in the future?

2. Can the Council Leader clarify whether responsibility for the decisions leading to this loss has been traced to specific post-holders -- whether at Cabinet, Director, or Board Level -- and what mechanisms are being used to hold those individual roles publicly accountable?

Response:

1. The Council is continuing to take specialist professional advice as it works through the structured closure of Cornovii. Our immediate priority is to protect the Council's financial and commercial interests, minimise the anticipated loss and maximise the return to the Council from the company's remaining assets.

   The decisions already taken reflect learning from the experience, including strengthened governance and oversight of the closure process, the use of specialist external advice, and a clear focus on securing best consideration from the disposal or transfer of assets. The current estimate of the loss is not a fixed figure and will depend on a number of factors, including market conditions, timing and the value ultimately realised from assets.

   It would therefore be premature to set out a definitive list of lessons while that work remains under way. As the process progresses, the Council will consider the wider learning from Cornovii and how that should inform the governance, oversight and management of any similar arrangements in the future.

2. The Council's present focus is on managing the structured closure properly, protecting the public purse and achieving the best possible financial outcome for the Council.

Decisions relating to Cornovii have been taken at different stages and through the appropriate governance arrangements. It would not be appropriate to seek to attribute individual responsibility while the current work is continuing or without a proper evidential basis.

As matters progress, any issues requiring further consideration or action will be dealt with appropriately through the Council's established governance, audit, employment or other relevant processes. It would be wrong to prejudge the outcome of any such process.