

March 2025 Report

Healthy People Healthy Environment Healthy Economy Healthy Organisation

Street Lighting Action: The Council will soon be approaching Town and Parish Councils directly with an offer to discuss street lighting related queries and concerns. For example, providing advice to help make savings reducing energy bills through LED lighting and changing energy tariffs. Also the Council will be happy to advise on maintenance contracts, concrete columns/pole replacement regimes, lighting inventories, safety implication etc.

In due course the Council will look to set up informal meetings to cover the relevant common topics that emerge. It may be an idea for Parish/Town councils to share issues that they have in common and combine these meetings.

Modern Day Slavery: Every year, as elected Members, we are required to complete an e-learning module on Modern Day slavery – and each year the figures continue to shock. Modern day slavery is found across all communities regardless of ethnic or religious background and it can be found across many economic sectors eg the building trade, agriculture, nail bars and cash washes. Our MP has started to push for more action to car washes – but please take a look at the ‘safe car wash’ app which enables everyone to report the possibility of modern day slavery. If you wish to report a concern call 0800 0121 700 or the Salvation Army on 0800 808 3733.

Potholes: The Highways Portfolio Holder has issued the following: The condition of the roads in the South of the county is not unique within Shropshire, or indeed across the country with almost all highway authorities struggling to keep on top of defects with numbers significantly rising year on year. This has been exacerbated in Shropshire by recent poor winters and flooding, which has severely stretched resources. Surveys of Shropshire’s roads show that 14.5% (or 463 miles) of the highway network in Shropshire is considered to be in need of significant repair! Whilst this is obviously disappointing Shropshire is performing better than the latest published national average (source ALARM survey March 2022) for roads in England across all highway authorities, which showed that 18% (or 36,918 miles) of roads maintained by local authorities are considered to be in need of significant repair.

Government funding for maintenance of roads has been insufficient to address the decline of highway networks for many years and this has been recognised by the Department for Transport with the introduction of its Pot Hole funding. Disappointingly however, Government funding to authorities has been frozen this year and for the next 2 years as well, despite unprecedented levels of inflation in maintenance costs. This means that authorities are able to do significantly less with the funding they receive. Many authorities have been topping up budgets over the years, however with overall local authority grants continuing to decrease, many authorities have had to stop this additional funding - and over 56% of highway authorities saw their budget’s cut.

Shropshire Council modelling shows that any extra funding for next year is still only sufficient to provide a small improvement in condition; and this is being further challenged by spiralling inflation in highways maintenance - which is seeing costs rise by over 30% for some activities. Notwithstanding the above, a significant amount of carriageway resurfacing work has been carried out in the South of Shropshire and further sites have been identified for inclusion in the future Capital programme in the next couple of years.

The ‘Transformation’ – the shape of Shropshire Council: The Council is looking to become more efficient. This ‘transformation’ will not happen overnight; but funding has been ringfenced to ensure that it does happen. The Chief Executive has stated that the ‘transformation’ will mean

Member relations - The configuration of the senior team will help ensure that they will work even more closely with the administration and all elected members (councillors), to ensure delivery of key policies, with transparency and a focus on impact and outcomes.

Removing silos through more collaboration – working together, the leadership board will take shared responsibility for the longer-term strategic direction of the council. Senior leaders as part of the leadership board will jointly report to executive directors, helping to break down silos and join together teams to tackle issues and deliver the outcomes and agreed priorities as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The shape of our future – this starts to set out how teams and services will be organised differently, showing the direction and key areas of focus for our new operating model and how we will work differently to be a sustainable modern and efficient council

A smaller, more agile team – the Council will be a smaller and more agile organisation, that will be able to respond the new challenges of local government review, and national reforms and local priorities. Just as many services are becoming smaller, it is only right that the leadership team is also significantly smaller, reduced from a team of 19 a year ago to 12.5, saving a third more than was originally planned

Partnership for prevention – further changes are being planned to enhance a joined-up approach to public health in communities, across the wider health and care system.

Specialism where it is needed – the new position of Director of Children’s Services (DCS) is a statutory position that was previously combined with adult social care in the Executive Director for People role. This new position will be solely focused on children’s services in line with our priority to put Shropshire's children at the heart of everything we do. This change will come into effect from July2025, to give consistent leadership during our expected corporate OFSTED inspection.

Best value on third party spending- likewise, a dedicated role focusing on commissioned services across the council will help us to ensure we have an even stronger oversight to get the best value for public spending.

North West Relief Road Shrewsbury. The final part to complete the ring road.

Attached is a report providing full financial information regarding the NWRR. There is a lot of information being circulated regarding the funding and the briefing note explains how the funding is only ringfenced from Central Government for that purpose and cannot be redirected to other projects or maintenance of existing roads. The implications of counselling the project also need to be understood and its implication on the Revenue budget of the Council.

Council Tax

The Council has agreed a Council tax increase of 4.99% for the coming year 25/26 and up to a 200% surcharge will be introduced for Empty homes and Second homes.

Household Waste Centres

Following on from the useful trial on booking to visit the centres the decision has now been taken to streamline the system. Cars will no longer have to book but proof of residency in Shropshire will be required on arrival. Vans and trailers will still have to book.

This trial has identified the amount of waste we are handling for residents outside Shropshire at our cost and the associated savings we will have by no longer handling non Shropshire waste.

Cllrs Gwilym Butler and Simon Harris

Clebury Mortimer Division

