

October 2025

OVERVIEW

Following the recent RTCs on the A41 I have again raised concerns over the lack of progress regarding the A41 Average Speed Camera Program. I have requested a site meeting with Shropshire highways as well as chasing Telford & Wrekin Council, the Police and Amey.

(03/09/25) I met with residents on Mill Green to discuss their concerns over the speed of Mill Green, currently National Speed Limit, but also to discuss the impact of the recent accidents on the A41 and especially the Mill Green junction. I will be raising these issues with the appropriate authorities and working with residents moving forward.

(10/09/25) Full cabinet meeting, agenda and decisions can be found here: [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 10th September, 2025, 10.30 am – Shropshire Council](#)

(18/09/25) Shropshire Council CEO Andy Begley handed in his notice to the council administration with immediate effect. We thanked Andy for his 12 years at the council, 5 as Head of the Paid Service. Tania Miles will act as interim CEO and will work with the administration and full council to address the financial challenge facing the council.

(25/09/25) Unfortunately I was unable to attend the full council meeting due to a prearranged family wedding. The agenda and minutes can be found on the council website: [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 25th September, 2025, 10.00 am – Shropshire Council](#). I would encourage everybody to read through the item 8 paper: **'A New Direction for Shropshire'** which outlines the Liberal Democrat Administration's vision for the council over the next four years.

FINANCE

It is no surprise for the council to be facing the financial position it is now in. Residents have been feeling the pressures of service cuts for a number of years and the during the May election, the Lib Dems stood on a manifesto promise to get the council finances back on firm ground. That said, it is only since taking full control of the council that we have been able to fully explore the position the council is in. The realities of years of mismanagement by the previous administration, the lack of contract control and the national pressures has left the administration in a difficult position.

That said, we knew that we would be inheriting a difficult position as the current working budget had already been approved by the previous administration in February 2025 and cannot be changed. The Lib Dems have been formulating a plan from our first day in office and have been challenging the financial officers to produce more effective reporting for scrutiny. Our plan and actions (*see below cabinet resolution*) will be presented to an Independent Improvement Panel who will work with the administration, council officers and staff to avoid declaring a Section 114 notice before March 2026. The current forecasts demonstrate an illegal £0.899m overspend in the current financial year and therefore a section 114 would have to be declared to central government and the council would be taken over by commissioners.

The financial position was clearly outlined to council leader Cllr Heather Kidd and opposition leader Cllr Dawn Huseman, Reform UK, before being made public. The opposition party have given their support to the administration. All Lib Dem councillors have been meeting to discuss the council financial position and are in constant communication. The Liberal Democrat administration are also receiving legal advice and guidance from the ALDC (Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors).

At the cabinet meeting on the 10th September, it was agreed to formally declare a Financial Emergency at the council. The cabinet has resolved the following actions:

- A.** To declare a financial emergency and direct the Chief Executive (in conjunction with the Council Leader) to instruct all Officers to take emergency action to reduce all non-essential spending between September and March to significantly improve the Period 4 forecast of a projected spend over budget of £35.169m. Such action should predominantly focus on reducing spend, delivering remaining savings and significant mitigating actions to control in-year spending pressures.
- B.** Direct the Chief Executive to work closely with the LGA and the Council Leader to put in place an independently chaired Improvement Board, as recommended in the recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, as soon as practicable.
- C.** To note that Operations Boards, to ultimately work with the Improvement Board, are in place from August 2025 to challenge all in-year spending.
- D.** To note that the Period 4 position (as at the end of July) forecasts indicative savings delivery of £34.012m (57%).
- E.** To note the projected General Fund Balance is now negative (£0.899m), indicating a potentially illegal financial position by the end of the financial year if no further action is taken.
- F.** Immediately direct the Chief Executive, working in collaboration with Cabinet, to bring forward a sustainable corporate plan for the authority to Council in December, reflected in a medium term financial strategy that sets out an approach to deliver a sustainable financial position within a timeframe of no more than three years.

CASEWORK

Casework	Issue Raised / Portfolio	Actions
Ollerton Business Park, Childs Ercall	PLANNING: Various planning applications have been passed yet conditions not met (esp highways)	- Resident communication shared with planning portfolio holder. (03/06/25) Emma Green (<i>Planning Enforcement Leader</i>) has replied directly to a resident concern outlining the stages for legal involvement. - I will continue to chase. planningenforcement@shropshire.gov.uk can be used to report any breaches of planning.
A41 Safety	HIGHWAYS/POLICE: Update on the installation of average speed cameras along the A41.	(26/05/25) Letter received from Mark Pritchard MP outlining that money has been secured but requires Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils to complete a 'Route Study' which has been actioned by contractor Amey. (04/06/25) Shropshire Highways: "I can confirm that Amey on behalf of Telford & Wrekin are making some final amendments, namely including some final comments. Although we have not had a date confirmed we are

		<i>anticipating the report will be available in the next month or so”.</i> • (08/07/25) Spoken with colleagues on TAW Council who are also chasing. • (03/09/25) I have written to the highways team to request an urgent site meeting to discuss the progress on this. • (23/09/25) email from Highways officer, happy to meet but we have agreed to wait until we see the engineering report from AMEY as it is understood that Mill Green will feature in that report.
23/03138/FUL Mixed 28 Residential Dwellings Childs Ercall	PLANNING: This has gone to 'recommendations/committee'	• (09/06/25) I have contacted the case officer regarding the general position of this application having been made aware of community concerns. • (17/07/25) No communication received, concerns raised by the Lib Dem administration over the lack of response from officers. • (01/09/25) Email received from case officer to confirm the current position of this application (updates available on the planning portal). • (21/09/25) Request for this to be called-in to the Northern Planning Committee.

PARISH COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

Here are questions posed by parish councillors across the division and updates/answers at present.

Question	Answer / Outcomes
What effect does the council finances have on future CIL?	Cllr David Walker (Portfolio holder) is working to ensure that CIL money will be directed to the appropriate communities. Under the previous administration, some CIL monies have been held back to support overall council finances, this is something we are working to address.
How long can a Parish Council hold CIL?	Answer from Cllr David Walker: If earmarked for audit then a parish has 5 years before Shropshire Council could ask for this money to be returned.
Eaton On Tern Solar Farm - Will residents benefit financially?	Officers still investigating. I have had no updates.
What Public Transport initiatives will be available across the Sutton Upon Tern parish?	We are still waiting for the outcome of the Bus Bill (No2) which will determine the funding/authority that Shropshire will receive. It is highly anticipated that Shropshire (and all authorities) will be given the powers to create and operate new bus routes which we would look to use to improve the services in rural areas.