

## Local Plan Update

The much-heralded replacement Local Plan continues to make its slow laborious way. This plan contains the policies for how Shropshire Council will determine future planning applications for the next 14 years. This work started of course over 4 years ago and due to various resource issues has been much delayed.

The Government requires councils to update their plans identifying land which could be developed every 5 years, (The present plan was rolled out in 2016). The plan identifies areas which are Shropshire Councils (SC) preferred sites, where extra houses and new employment sites to meet government plans should be located & includes some sites carried forward from the old plan & some new sites.

As recently reported in the media, Government Planning Inspectors visited Shropshire in July for two weeks and held an initial examination of the proposals. After this ended, and in answer to some legal challenges, the Inspectors decided that they would return in early October, hear some final submissions, and then rule on whether the proposed plan complied with Government legislation. If they determine it does not comply then the whole plan will be rejected, and SC will have to start the process all over again. If they agree the legal process has been carried out correctly then Stage 2 of the planning enquiry will need to be held next year. At that meeting, expected to last a number of weeks, individual sites will be examined to see if they each comply in general terms with the various new policies being put forward by SC.

Other news from Shropshire Council.

Last week, SC published the financial monitoring report for the first three months of the year. It shows the impacts of the cost of living and inflation on our budget, with inflation estimated to add an extra £5m in costs and more demand for our services, another £7 million!, some of which is linked to the support we are rightly giving residents with the cost of living. At present these pressures mean SC is looking at a forecasted overspend on its budget of at least £4.1 million, however the best estimate of the overspend, with no additional action being taken is estimated to be around £9.37m but could be as high as £17.56M Details of any amendments to the budget to reduce this sum are still to be announced. This came after the Council denied there was a problem, however a report agreed by the Shropshire Council Cabinet has stated there is a need to re-examine this year's current budget!

- After a long time and a spend of over £500k work on making the lower 3 floors of the Shirehall safe for staff to work in is nearing completion. There is now a prohibition of use issued for the upper 3 floors and these therefore cannot be used nor accessed by staff.

- The spend on the Northwest Relief Road is now approaching £20m with still no planning application or business plan published.

More than 30 companies have signed up to take part in 'Shropshire Goes Green', Shropshire Council's first sustainability festival being held outside at Shrewsbury Town FC on Sunday 25 September 2022 - and apparently the list is still growing. Building on the success of November 2021's Shropshire Goes Electric event, which put the spotlight on sustainable transport and encouraged the use of electric vehicles, Shropshire Goes Green is focusing on all aspects of sustainability. SC has a sponsor, a company called 'AceOn', who will be demonstrating the latest in energy storage and technologies, and there is a varied list of exhibitors for the 'Home Zone', including electric vehicle charging point providers, agricultural experts and companies providing green energy solutions for households".