

## **SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL REPORT FOR 2016/17**

### **Local Plan Review**

Shropshire is in the fortunate position of having a sound local plan and a five-year land supply. This adopted plan covers the period 2006 to 2026. Consultation is now taking place (23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017) on the first review of our plan covering the period 2016 – 2036 (an extra 10 years). The full document Shropshire Local Plan Review consultation on issues and options can be found on the Shropshire Council Planning Policy pages on their website. The main point to note, this time, is that Shropshire Council will decide which parishes (settlements) are community hubs. The criteria that will be used to determine a community hub can be found on page 41 of the document. The document does not state how many of the criteria must be met in order for the parish to be classified as a hub. If you are not one of the chosen hubs you still have the option to become community clusters or stay as open countryside. Another difference in this review is that there will be no settlement boundaries. In the past, parishes have drawn a development boundaries around the main settlement and have relied on these to contain development.

### **Environmental Maintenance Grant**

These grants are made to parishes to maintain specific areas within the parish. Usually it involves grass cutting and general maintenance of community areas. The grant process was closed to new applicants however Shropshire Council have now reopened the scheme to all parish councils. The total budget of £110,000 is the same as last year and the maximum grant is £3,000 per parish. The deadline for applications is the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017. At this point, there are no guarantees for funding in the 2018/19 financial year which should be kept in mind when setting the precept for that year.

I have always been a great supporter of this grant, it allows parishes to prioritize work within their area and get jobs done to their satisfaction. The grant also represents great value for money for Shropshire Council.

### **Buildwas Power Station Site**

Buildwas Power Station closed in November 2015. The site extends to 350 acres. In 2015 Eon split in to two separate companies and Uniper became the owners of the site. At a recent meeting between Uniper, Shropshire Council, interested parties and parish councils Uniper announced that they would be looking to submit a planning application to demolish the towers within the next few months and will be putting the site up for sale as soon as the work is complete with a view to completing a sale by the end of the year. Clearly the site is of strategic importance both for Shropshire and Telford. The surrounding parishes wish to be kept informed and work together with any developer to represent the views and aspirations of our local communities. Whatever development takes place it is likely to impact on the surrounding villages. I have been involved in the recent meetings and will continue to ensure that the views of the parish councils are taken into consideration.

### **Broadband and Connecting Shropshire**

Eaton Constantine, Garmston and Leighton will be receiving fibre to the premise. This scheme to provide fibre to the premise is the largest in Shropshire. The network is serviced by Cressage Cabinet One and includes 1800 metres of mole ploughing across fields in

multiple ownership which has caused some delays. I have been promised that the work will be completed by the end of March 2017 and that orders should be able to be placed in early April. I appreciate the frustration of residents with regards to the length of time this is taking however the end is in sight.

### **Adult Social Care**

Many of you will have heard about the pressures on Shropshire Council's budget of an ageing population. In Shropshire 23% of our residents are above 65. The national average is 18%. By 2036 it is envisaged that 33% of Shropshire Council's population will be above 65. Clearly this has and will continue to have a major impact on Shropshire Council's budget. The Council's gross budget is £563m. The Council receives specific ring-fenced grants for example, education which can only be spent on education. Once all the specific ring-fenced grants have been allocated against the budget it leaves Shropshire Council with a net budget of £204m. It is from within this net budget that Shropshire Council must find the monies to cover the adult social care costs along with all the other functions and duties of the council, many statutory, such as waste collection, school transport (this does not come out of the education budget), libraries, subsidised public transport, looked after children and so the list goes on. Presently the adult social care budget is £82m and on average this amount is rising by £8m a year. This is not just an issue for Shropshire Council. Representatives from Shropshire council (and many shire councils across the UK), along with our MPs are lobbying government to find a formula, as we have for schools, so that adult social care is funded on a national rather than local basis.

If you have any questions you would like to ask please feel free to contact me at any time.

### **Claire Wild**

Shropshire Councillor for the Severn Valley

[01743 761619](tel:01743761619)

[claire.wild@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:claire.wild@shropshire.gov.uk)