

## PARISH COUNCIL REPORT – JULY 2022

### 1. Integrated Care System

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> July the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group was abolished and was replaced by the Integrated Care System.

There is an Integrated Care Board, chaired by Sir Neil McKay and an Integrated Care Partnership jointly chaired by the Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council and I.

The ICS provides Local Government with many opportunities but also many risks. It is early days and there is lots of work taking place. I am hoping that a genuine partnership between Local Government and the NHS will emerge.

### 2. Health

There are many meetings taking place at present regarding the situation with healthcare, specifically our hospitals, ambulance waiting times and the possible super hub for GPs in Shrewsbury. Although Shropshire Council has no direct responsibility for the latter it is important that we represent the feelings of our residents, especially around transport etc.

### 3. Telford Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation

The long-awaited Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation has published its findings. The Inquiry has shown how this has ruined many young lives of its victims over a period of nearly 35 years and that opportunities to prevent this were missed.

The crimes that the inquiry has focused on in the neighbouring authority of Telford & Wrekin, are happening right across the country. Thankfully awareness of this crime is now far greater. In Shropshire, we now have much stronger safeguards in place to help partners and the community identify, intervene, and protect those at risk.

Practice among the very broad range of partners involved in protecting children at risk of sexual and other exploitation is now very different from that in 1989, the start of the period covered by the Inquiry but remains a challenge for all involved in children's safeguarding.

Shropshire Council voluntarily supported the Inquiry, which was commissioned by Telford & Wrekin Council. This has included providing significant documentary evidence it has requested, as well as contacting and helping put the inquiry in touch with a number of key former Shropshire County Council employees who have then given evidence to the Inquiry.

For clarity, since 1998 responsibility for children's social care in Telford has been the responsibility of Telford & Wrekin Council and prior to that was the responsibility of Shropshire County Council, which ceased to exist in 2009 when the new unitary Shropshire Council was created.

Like all authorities involved in looking after children, the inquiry's findings provide important learning and an in-depth review of practice.

In recent years, the approach to tackling child sexual and other forms of exploitation has changed enormously. The council set up a multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation Panel to help prevent and respond to Child Sexual Exploitation. This Panel has now evolved to tackle all forms of exploitation.

Tackling exploitation is a key priority for the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership and much has been done by a range of agencies to further improve our response to exploitation in Shropshire.

Our child exploitation pathway was reviewed in 2021 to further help our frontline staff find the information they need as quickly as possible when they are working with children at risk of or experiencing exploitation. OFSTED inspected

our children's services in 2022 and rated our service as good, stating that: "children benefit from effective multi agency working to identify those who are vulnerable to exploitation or are being exploited."

We continue to work as part of Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership and to raise awareness of all forms of exploitation including Child Sexual Exploitation.

If anyone is concerned about or thinks a child or young person is at risk of exploitation, they should contact one of these numbers:

- Report this **anonymously** by contacting CrimeStoppers UK on 0800 555 111.
- Call Shropshire Council's First Point of Contact team on 0345 678 9021. This is a 24 hour number.
- Call the police on 101. If you think someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

In the coming weeks, we will be taking time to read the [report](#)'s 1,249 pages in detail and consider its recommendations and the learning that we take from this to ensure we and partners are doing all we can to prevent exploitation of young people in Shropshire.

#### 4. Census

The preliminary findings of the latest census have shown that Shropshire's population is getting older and that the number of younger people is decreasing. In all honesty we didn't need the census to tell us this – we've known for a long time that this is the case. Perhaps the most worrying aspect is that by 2035 the number of elderly people will outnumber those of working age. This does not bode well for council budgets which are already stretched by social care costs.

#### 5. Draft Local Plan

The Shropshire Council Draft Local Plan has completed the first section of the public examination stage. Much of this stage was around policy areas. The inspection concerning individual sites will be in the autumn.

As ever, if you have specific questions or would like to know more about the work your Council undertakes please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Best wishes

*Lezley Picton*

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