

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE
6 DECEMBER 2021**

Officer: Helen Ball – Town Clerk

ROUNABOUT SPONSORSHIP

Purpose of Report

- (i) To update the Committee on Shropshire Council's intention to outsource Roundabout Sponsorship
- (ii) To consider Shropshire Council's proposals in relation to securing the sponsorship income of Shrewsbury in Bloom

Introduction

Shropshire Council presented a report to cabinet about proposals to source additional revenue funding through advertising

[SC Highway Asset Advertising Proposal - Final .pdf \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Recently officers at Shropshire Council have contacted the Town Council to discuss roundabout sponsorship in Shrewsbury. Of the 85 roundabouts for consideration across Shropshire, 27 are maintained by Shrewsbury Town Council on which the long-established Shrewsbury In Bloom Sponsorship Scheme operates.

Shrewsbury in Bloom has run a sponsorship scheme for about 35 years since the Borough Council days and upon local government reorganisation in 2009 the management of that scheme passed to the Town Council. At the time all signs were minimal in black and gold designed to be respectful of the Shrewsbury Conservation Area and not detract from the sightlines of passing traffic. The Town Council submitted an application to the Planning Authority for an increased sign with the ability to brand the signs; this was duly approved.

The Scheme runs a Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze Scheme with charges ranging from £266 - £1,200 + VAT per year depending on the size, vehicular flow and horticultural excellence of the roundabout. Only one island is Platinum and the majority of the roundabouts are Gold. Without exception all roundabout sponsors are very local companies/organisations from Crowmoor School who sponsor the island on the inner ring road at Crowmere Road to organisations like Salop Leisure & Morris Leisure. Off the record conversations have taken place with 4 of Bloom's longest serving sponsors and all said they sponsor not because it attracts business, but more it is a nice thing to do and puts something back into the town, the Town Council and Shrewsbury in Bloom; all said they would reconsider whether it was to purely fund the principal council's core budget.

Demand for sponsorship locations is high with the regular commentary from prospective sponsors being they want to put something back into the town rather than any aspirations of increased business activity.

Shropshire Council wish to contract roundabout sponsorship out to a Marketing agency and expect to be able to generate £3-4k a roundabout generating £392k over a 4 year term. For this to work they require a single sponsorship arrangement across the county. In return for the Town Council ceasing its sponsorship

scheme Shropshire Council would guarantee a comparable level of income that the Town Council currently receives.

This poses a few questions for the Town Council to consider:

1. Shropshire Council Officers discussed the fact that 85 roundabouts existed in the Shropshire, with 27 operated by the Town Council, yet the report refers to 45 viable roundabouts; which of the 27 are in the list of 45?
2. It is difficult to see how such sums could be attracted on some of the roundabouts given the traffic volume, with the exception of islands like Meole, Frankwell and those on the A49 and Battlefield by-pass;
3. There is time spent sending annual invoices and liaising with sponsors and this burden could potentially be removed and the Council still receives a comparable income. But what guarantee would the Town Council have of receiving the existing revenue without any formal, binding agreement;
4. Will any income generated from the sponsorship scheme be spent in Shrewsbury?
5. Town Council staff have had to work hard in retaining sponsorship in such challenging times;
6. The Town Council subsidises the planting on some of those roundabouts, this costing more than the amount received, all designed to put something back into the town;
7. The Town Council has a business rate liability on some of these roundabouts which were identified by Shropshire Council registering them for Business Rates without our knowledge;
8. Sponsorship also takes place on land owned by the Town Council (Dingle, Closed Church Yards, Pocket Parks). Would that continue?
9. Even if the Town Council walked away from sponsoring the roundabouts, maintenance of those roundabouts would still continue as they are all contained within the Horticultural Service Level Agreement. This would be at a reduced standard. Any future sponsor may expect higher standards due to the reduced Service Level Agreement specification.

The Shrewsbury in Bloom Committee met on the 2nd December and this matter was discussed. All were disappointed with the proposals citing the fact that Shrewsbury retains a very unique offer that adds to the vibrancy and that business involvement reflects their pride in where they operate. They made reference to other areas within the civic County of Shropshire where sponsorship takes place on roundabouts which are nothing more than grass. The Committee recommended that the Council does not support the proposals.

Interestingly the report suggests opportunities for income generation that aren't being explored including use of lamp columns, bus shelters and developing carbon mitigation opportunities. This report focuses on the passing car, yet the Town Council operates land where the passing pedestrian uses an area in greater numbers. If Shropshire Council wishes to price out some of our existing sponsors could they be accommodated elsewhere on the Town Council estate. Officers have discussed potential adoption of key trees, carbon mitigation sponsorship of things like sedum roofs, discrete sponsorship in the parks and around sporting facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the Report be noted;

- (ii) That the Council supports the recommendation of the Bloom Committee that Shropshire Council's proposals not be supported;
- (iii) That regardless of Shropshire Council's intentions, the Council continues with and looks to expand its Bloom Sponsorship Scheme;
- (iv) That officers explore other opportunities that might support business and community financing of assets