



<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Paper</u>
Implementation Executive 9 April 2008	<b>9</b> Public	<b>D</b>

## NEW SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL POLITICAL STRUCTURE

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### Summary

The original One Council for Shropshire Business Case set out political arrangements for the new unitary council. Since the formation of the Implementation Executive (IE) these proposals have been developed. Analysis has also been undertaken to ascertain likely workload and leading roles as part of the new political structure. This research provided base information to profile a range of scenarios for the likely number of total councillors for the new Shropshire Council

### Recommendations

- A To agree the political structure for the unitary Shropshire Council.
- B To agree 75 as the number of councillors for the unitary Shropshire Council

## Report

### Background

1. The original One Council for Shropshire business case discussed the proposed political arrangements for the new unitary council. The general principles would enable:
  - Effective representation of all Shropshire's communities;
  - Appropriate political leadership for services;
  - Local delivery, direction and scrutiny of services through unitary Councillors and local communities;
  - Strategic and local regulatory decision making and delivery;
  - High levels of probity and scrupulous political behaviour subject to strategic and local scrutiny;
  - The holding to account and scrutiny of other public services in Shropshire;
  - High profile, civic pride in Shropshire which respects a local way of life and the County's people and its heritage;
  - The promotion and celebration of diversity in Shropshire's communities

2. The business case also detailed overarching strategic and political structures. Since the formation of the implementation Executive (IE) these have been further developed as discussed within this report

### **Development of Political Structures and Overall Councillor Numbers**

3. The Implementation Executive (IE) considered a report on the size of the Unitary Council in January 2008 and the draft Blueprint in February 2008 which built upon the original proposals for political structures contained within the One Council for Shropshire Business Case. Details can be seen at Appendix A, but the key issues are discussed in the following paragraphs.
4. Chairman and Speaker roles will be formed for the new council. The Chairman of the Council will act as the ceremonial head of the council and undertake ceremonial duties. The Speaker will chair the meetings of Full Council and champion the Council's constitution.
5. An elected Leader and Cabinet model of government is proposed for the new council. The Leader will head a cabinet of nine further portfolio holders. The political portfolios must reflect the importance of service delivery in order that service improvement does not suffer from whole scale organisational change. Service portfolio should be constructed to ensure that current district council services are not just attached to county council services and so lose their strategic and customer importance. It is likely that some portfolio holder roles will be more intensive than others. The Leader will also have a local, regional and partnership role to perform
6. Regulatory committees will comprise one Strategic Planning Committee and three area regulatory committees meeting in the north, central and south areas of the county to cover planning applications, traffic orders and rights of way issues. There will also be separate Licensing Committees meeting as required in the north, central and south areas of the county. All regulatory committees will comprise 11 members.
7. There will be strong scrutiny arrangements, comprising Strategic Overview & Scrutiny Panel, Health Overview & Crime Reduction Scrutiny Panel, Children & Young Persons Service Scrutiny Panel, Adult Services Scrutiny Panel, Development Services Scrutiny Panel. All, except for the Health Overview & Crime Reduction Scrutiny Panel, will be chaired by a member of the opposition. All scrutiny panels will comprise 10 members.
8. Maintaining close links to the local community is a priority in the One Council Business Case. Area Partnerships North, Central and South will be established to facilitate partnership working covering local links to the community strategy, crime reduction and community regeneration. Building on the current pilot areas 20 to 27 Local Joint Committees will be established. The aim of the local committees is to encourage and enable local decision-making, providing local communities the opportunity to scrutinise Council services, as well as other public bodies working in the county. Each local committee was allocated a delegated budget to enhance local services within their respective communities to enable local people to have a discretionary budget that can be used to meet local needs. The Local Joint Committees will also have a major role to play in community call to action, petitions and scrutiny.

9. New roles of Member Champion will be created to ensure that communities of interest as well as geographic communities have a strong voice within the Council. These appointments will not be made from members of Cabinet but will be open to all other members to apply for the position which means that members other than those in the administration can be appointed. This has the potential to strengthen the role of the champion as they will not be restrained by adherence and loyalty to administration policies. Sectoral representatives will have the opportunity to commend to the Council champions for the role. Member champions will cover the following –
  - Champion for Older People
  - Champion for Young People
  - Champion for Business Sector
  - Champion for Affordable Housing
  - Champion for Equalities & Diversity
  - Champion for the Third Sector
10. A Standards Committee with three associated sub committees will be established comprising 4 members. In addition there will be a Pensions Committee also comprising 4 members and an Audit Committee of 5 members.
11. The frontline councillor will be the pivotal link between the Council and the local people and communities and be recognised as a local leader by the community who:
  - is a local voice for the community at the Council;
  - through the local area committee has the powers to determine budget allocations for grants to local groups or for local projects;
  - is a key person in promoting local regeneration and affordable housing proposals;
  - is a person who brings together local organisations for the good of the community;
  - is a person who contributes to or chairs local public meetings which will include formal council consultation on both strategic and local issues;
  - is someone in authority who can hold the Council to account for poor performance in the local area;
  - has a key role in scrutiny of central policy.
12. An analysis was undertaken to establish basic levels of workload (high, medium or low) associated with the various leading roles within the overarching political arrangements. Leading roles for the administration and non administration were also assessed. This research provided basic information to profile a range of scenarios for the total number of councillors for the new unitary authority. Details of the proposed political structures and the various scenarios for total numbers of councillors can be seen at Appendix A.
13. A meeting of the IE in January (acting as a sounding board) discussed the various scenarios with option two being the most favoured. It is suggested, based on the

scenarios profiled, that the number of councillors for the new authority should be 75.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

IE Report - Size of Unitary Council  
IE Report - Blueprint Design One Council for Shropshire

**Human Rights Act Appraisal**

Not applicable

**Environmental Appraisal**

Not applicable

**Risk Management Appraisal**

Not applicable

**Community / Consultations Appraisal**

Not applicable

**Member Champions**

**Cabinet Member**

Not applicable

**Local Member**

Not applicable

**Appendices**

Details of the proposed political structures and scenarios for total number of councillors

## Appendix A - Details of the Proposed Political Structures and Scenarios for Total Number Of Councillors

No of councillors on committee	ROLE	COMMENTS	Assessment of workload H/M/L	Leading role Administration	Leading role Non Administration	Leading role Any councillor
1	Chairman	Ceremonial head and undertake ceremonial duties	L	1		
1	Speaker	Chair meetings of council	M	1		
1	Leader	Cabinet every 2 weeks, portfolio holder roles Partnership, role regional role, local role	H	1		
9	Cabinet	Cabinet every 2 weeks, portfolio holder roles local role. Some portfolio roles will be more intensive than others	H	9		
11	Strategic planning Committee	Every 4 weeks	M	1		
	Regulatory Committee North	Planning applications+ site visits Rights of Way, Traffic Orders (meeting monthly)	H	1		
	Regulatory Committee Central			1		
	Regulatory Committee South			1		
	Licensing Committee North	meets as required (quarterly on average)	L	1		
	Licensing Committee Central			1		
	Licensing Committee South			1		
5	Audit committee	As current SCC every 8 weeks	L	1		
4	Standards Committee	Independent (non council) chair Quarterly	M			
	Standards Sub Committee	Independent (non council) chair meets monthly	L			
	Standards Sub Committee	Independent (non council) chair meets as required	L			
	Standards Sub Committee	Independent (non council) chair meets as required	L			
4	Pensions Committee	As current SCC Quarterly	L	1		
	20 - 27 Local Joint Committees	Check against map for area numbers - quarterly	H			20/27
1	Champion for Older People	Open to all cllrs to apply (except members of Cabinet) Briefings, events, partnerships,	L			1
1	Champion for Young People					1
1	Champion for Business Sector					1
1	Champion for Affordable Housing					1
1	Champion for Equalities & Diversity					1
1	Champion for the Third Sector					1
10	Strategic Overview & Scrutiny Panel	6 weeks	H		1	
10	Health Overview & Crime Reduction Scrutiny Panel	6 weeks	H		1	
10	Children & Young Persons Service Scrutiny Panel	6 weeks	H		1	
10	Adult Services Scrutiny Panel	6 weeks	H		1	
10	Development Services Scrutiny Panel	6 weeks	H		1	

No of councillors on committee	ROLE	COMMENTS	Assessment of workload HML	Leading role Administration	Leading role Non Administration	Leading role Any councillor
	Area Partnership South	Supporting evidence to business case – coordinating role in to draw together issues across an area - quarterly	L	1		
	Area Partnership Central		L	1		
	Area Partnership North		L	1		
<b>TOTALS</b>				24	5	26

## SCENARIOS

### 1 No Doubling of Administration Lead roles

Assuming average 9 members per scrutiny

		Comments
Administration leading roles	24	24 leading roles
Scrutiny	45	9 places on 5 Scrutiny committees
TOTAL	69	which would need to incorporate 20 local area meeting chairs and 6 Champion roles

### 2 No Doubling of Administration Lead roles

Assuming average 10 members per scrutiny

		Comments
Administration	24	24 leading roles
Scrutiny	50	10 places on 5 Scrutiny committees
TOTAL	74	which would need to incorporate 20 local area meeting chairs and 6 Champion roles

### 3 No Doubling of Administration Lead roles / Doubling of Scrutiny

Assuming average 10 members per scrutiny committee Pool of 30 councillors cover 5 committees between them

		Comments
Administration	24	24 leading roles
Non Administration	30	Pool of 30 councillors cover 5 committees between them
TOTAL	54	which would need to incorporate 20 local area meeting chairs and 6 Champion roles

### 4 No Doubling of Administration Lead roles / Doubling of Scrutiny

Assuming average 10 members per scrutiny committee Pool of 40 councillors cover 5 committees between them

		Comments
Administration	24	24 leading roles
Non Administration	40	Pool of 40 councillors cover 5 committees between them
TOTAL	64	which would need to incorporate 20 local area meeting chairs and 6 Champion roles