

Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Tuesday, 28 May 2024

Committee:
Cabinet

Date: Wednesday, 5 June 2024
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting. The Agenda is attached

There will be some access to the meeting room for members of the press and public, but this will be limited. If you wish to attend the meeting please email democracy@shropshire.gov.uk to check that a seat will be available for you.

Please click [here](#) to view the livestream of the meeting on the date and time stated on the agenda

The recording of the event will also be made available shortly after the meeting on the Shropshire Council Youtube Channel [Here](#)

Tim Collard Assistant Director - Legal and Governance

Members of Cabinet

Lezley Picton (Leader)
Cecilia Motley
Ian Nellins
Robert Macey
Gwilym Butler
Dean Carroll
Kirstie Hurst-Knight
Mark Jones
Dan Morris
Chris Schofield

Your Committee Officer is:

Ashley Kendrick Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 01743 250893
Email: ashley.kendrick@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Interests

Members are reminded that they must declare their disclosable pecuniary interests and other registrable or non-registrable interests in any matter being considered at the meeting as set out in Appendix B of the Members' Code of Conduct and consider if they should leave the room prior to the item being considered. Further advice can be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 10)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2024.

4 Public Question Time

To receive any questions from members of the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification is not later than 5.00 pm on Thursday 30th May 2024.

5 Member Question Time

To receive any questions from Members of the Council. Deadline for notification is not later than 5.00 pm on Thursday 30th May 2024.

6 Scrutiny Items

7 Financial Outturn 2023/24 (Pages 11 - 54)

Lead Member – Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities

Lead officer - Ben Jay

8 Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 4 2023/24 (Pages 55 - 64)

Lead Member – Councillor Rob Macey – Portfolio Holder for Culture and Digital

Lead Officer – Sam Williams

9 Treasury Management Update Quarter 4 2023/24 (Pages 65 - 88)

Lead Member – Councillor Gwilym Butler – Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities

Lead Officer – Ben Jay

10 Financial Monitoring Period 1 (Pages 89 - 98)

Lead Member – Councillor Gwilym Butler – Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities

Lead Officer – Ben Jay

11 Recommendation for the Adderley, Moreton Say and Norton in Hales Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to Referendum (Pages 99 - 224)

Lead Member – Councillor Chris Schofield – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

Lead Officer – Vicky Turner

12 Exclusion of Press and Public

To resolve that, in accordance with the provisions of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 [3] of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items

13 Exempt Minutes (Pages 225 - 226)

To confirm the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2024.

14 Pump House, Coton Hill Disposal Report (Pages 227 - 234)

Lead Member - Councillor Dean Carroll - Portfolio Holder for Housing & Assets

Lead Officer – Steve Law

15 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 17th July at 2pm.

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Committee and Date

Cabinet

5 June 2024

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2024

**In the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND
10.30 am**

Responsible Officer: Ashley Kendrick

Email: ashley.kendrick@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 250893

Present

Councillor Lezley Picton (Chairman)

Councillors Cecilia Motley, Ian Nellins, Robert Macey, Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll,
Kirstie Hurst-Knight, Mark Jones, Dan Morris and Chris Schofield

138 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Professor Mark Barrow, Executive Director of Place.

139 Disclosable Interests

There were no disclosable interests received.

140 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2024 as an accurate record.

141 Public Question Time

Anne Povey, in relation to unsafe parking at Haughmond Hill. A response was provided by the Portfolio Holder for Highways.

Felicity Pennal, in relation to residents parking, Chapel Street, Wem. A response was provided by the Portfolio Holder for Highways.

Andrew Burden, in relation to dog fouling on the Weir Estate. A response was provided by the Portfolio Holder for Highways.

Susan Howle, on behalf of Tasley Parish Council, in relation to Post-16 transport. A response was provided by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Transport.

Matt Lakin, on behalf of Albrighton Village Action Group, in relation to the draft Local Plan. A response was provided by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services.

Pauline Dee BEM, in relation to parking fees in Wem. A response was provided by the Portfolio Holder for Highways.

An urgent question had been received from Rob Davies, in relation to the School Library Service. A response was provided by the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education.

The full questions and the responses provided to them are available from the public question item on the web page for the meeting - [Responses to Public Questions 17.4.24.pdf \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](#)

142 **Member Question Time**

An urgent Members' question was received from Councillor Roger Evans in relation to the School Library Service. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education confirmed that a copy of the consultation response would be circulated to members.

Members' questions had been received from the following:

Councillor Ruth Houghton, in relation to household recycling centres.

Councillor David Vasmer, in relation to the closure of Shrewsbury University. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets confirmed that the answer to the fifth question would be provided once the accounts for 2023/24 had been completed.

Councillor Heather Kidd, in relation to potholes. In response to a query regarding a prioritisation scheme, the Portfolio Holder for Highways advised that he would speak with the Assistant Director of Highways & Transport to provide a response.

Councillor Alex Wagner, read aloud by Councillor David Vasmer, in relation to Rowley's House. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets advised that extracts from the surveys would be provided with the written response to Councillor Wagner. In response to a supplementary question regarding when the report will come back to Cabinet for discussion, the Portfolio Holder was unable to provide a date but gave reassurance that it will not be delayed any longer than necessary.

Councillor Andy Boddington, in relation to gridlock in Ludlow. By way of supplementary question, Councillor Boddington requested further information with regards to the green bag scheme and it was confirmed that a response would be provided outside the meeting.

Councillor Tom Biggins, in relation to the Community Asset Transfer of the Contractors Yard / Sherrymill Hill Car Park. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets confirmed that a written response would be provided with regards to a date for when the section 78 notice will be issued.

The full questions and responses provided can be found on [Responses to Member Questions 17.4.24.pdf \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](#)

143 Scrutiny Items

There were no scrutiny items.

144 Parking Tariffs, Operations & Development

The Portfolio Holder for Highways introduced the report which set out the revised recommendations following a call in of the original proposal which was brought to Cabinet in January.

The report considered issues raised by Scrutiny Committee in relation to the original report. Members noted that there was no formal minute as yet but the issues they asked to be re-examined were:

- a) Compatibility with the Shrewsbury Movement and Public Space Strategy and current strategies in relation to graduation of parking charges in Shrewsbury according to proximity to the town centre.
- b) Why there is no increase at Raven Meadows Multi-Storey Car Park
- c) The effect on the economy
- d) Risks related to the Park and Ride service
- e) The use of surplus income from the Parking Service
- f) Maintenance history and arrangements
- g) Consultation methods
- h) The parking charge Band applied to Wem
- i) The necessity for and potential changes to Evening parking charges in Shrewsbury
- j) The necessity for and potential changes to Sunday parking charges throughout Shropshire.
- k) The potential for parking to be displaced into neighbouring areas

The Portfolio Holder presented a summary of the revised recommendations:

- 1. Wherever the original recommendation was to use a Notice of Variation it has been changed to a notice of proposal to make a Traffic Regulation Order, which includes a consultation/objection period.
- 2. 'Evening Charges' are now capped at £1.00 during any period between 6pm and 10pm
- 3. The Sunday Charge where charges are to be introduced is capped at the normal charge for 1 hour.
- 4. The new charge at Abbey Foregate will be £0.80 per hour.
- 5. The new charge at Raven Meadows multi-storey car park will be £2.40
- 6. Evening Charges will apply to Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars as per 2. above

Concerns were expressed that the proposed increases were excessive and disproportionate, and the effects the proposed increases would have on towns outside Shrewsbury.

The Portfolio Holder advised that there will be a revamp of the parking strategy and the bands of parking will be looked at as part of that.

RESOLVED:

To agree the recommendations 1-7 as set out below:

Recommendation 1 (in twelve parts) – parking tariffs

3.1 Cabinet is requested to approve advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders for consultation on each of the twelve items shown in Table A and the subsequent consideration of objections and making of the Orders if appropriate in accordance with the delegation to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure set out in Part 8 of the Council's Constitution.

3.2 Table A

Recommendation	CURRENT BAND	CURRENT TARIFF (Per Hour)	NEW TARIFF (Per Hour)	LOCATION	SUNDAY TARIFF
1a	1	£2.80	£3.60	Shrewsbury On-Street	Full
1b	2	£2.00	£2.80	Bridge St, St. Austins St, The Quarry	Full
1c	2	£2.00	£2.40	Raven Meadows	£2.40 flat fee
1d	3	£1.20	£1.60	St. Julians Friars	Full
1e	4	80p	£1.20	Frankwell – Main, Riverside and Quay	£1.20 flat fee
1f	5/4	60p/80p	£1.00	Bridgnorth, Ludlow On-Street (Blue), Much Wenlock	Half
1g	2	£2.00	£2.20	Ludlow On-Street (Red)	Full
1h	3	£1.20	£1.40	Ellesmere Mereside	Full
1i	3	£1.20	£1.40	Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Oswestry, Ellesmere	Half
1j	5	60p	80p	Abbey Foregate, Whitchurch, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Much Wenlock, Church Stretton	£0.80 flat fee
1k	6	40p	60p	All the above plus Wem and Prees Heath	£0.60 flat fee
1l	7	Free	Free	All other car parks	-

Recommendation 2 (in five parts) – Season Tickets

- 3.3 Cabinet is requested to approve advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders for consultation on each of the five items shown in Table B and the subsequent consideration of objections and making of the Orders if appropriate in accordance with the delegation to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure set out in Part 8 of the Council's Constitution.

3.4 Table B

Recommendation	CURRENT BAND	CURRENT TARIFF (Per Annum)	NEW TARIFF (Per Annum)	LOCATION EXAMPLES
2a	3	£512	£681	St Julians Friars
2b	4	£640	£960	Frankwell
2c	5	£480/£640	£800	Bridgnorth
2d	5	£480	£640	Abbey Foregate, Whitchurch, Church Stretton
2e	6	£320	£480	Ludlow, Oswestry, Market Drayton

Recommendation 3 (in nine parts) - resident permits

- 3.5 Cabinet is requested to approve advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders for consultation on each of the nine items shown in Table C and the subsequent consideration of objections and making of the Orders if appropriate in accordance with the delegation to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure set out in Part 8 of the Council's Constitution.

3.6 Table C

Recommendation	CURRENT BAND	CURRENT TARIFF (Per Annum)	NEW TARIFF (Per Annum)	LOCATION EXAMPLES
Shrewsbury Car Parks				
3a	3/4	£512	£768	Frankwell (Band 4), St Julians Friars though Band 3 has been linked to Band 4 for permits only
3b	5	£384	£512	Abbey Foregate, Shire Hall Overflow
Shropshire Car Parks				

3c		£100	£110	Ludlow On-Street
3d		£50	£58	Bridgnorth On-Street
3e	4	£512	£640	Back Lane, Much Wenlock
3f	5	£384	£512	All other locations
3g	6	£256	£384	
3h	Special	£448	£560	Riverside Bridgnorth
3i	Special	£192	£288	Prees Heath

Recommendation 4 – (In 4 parts)

3.7 Cabinet is requested to approve advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders for consultation on each of the four additional items for Shrewsbury town shown in Table D and the subsequent consideration of objections and making of the Orders if appropriate in accordance with the delegation to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure set out in Part 8 of the Council's Constitution.

3.8 Table D

Recommendation Number	Description	Detail
4a	Remove all daytime capped rates in Shrewsbury i.e. Abbey Foregate, Frankwell and Raven Meadows	From maximum fee of 8 hours to hourly charge for all hours
4b	Introduce evening tariffs to Shrewsbury on-street parking places	6.00pm-10.00pm. £1.00 flat fee
4c	Introduce evening tariffs to Bridge Street, St Austins Street and The Quarry car parks	6.00pm-10.00pm. £1.00 flat fee
4d	Introduce evening tariffs to Frankwell, Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars car parks	6.00pm-10.00pm. £1.00 flat fee

Recommendation 5 – Parking Asset Improvement Plan (P.A.I.P)

3.9 Cabinet approve that a Parking Asset Improvement Plan be prepared.

Recommendation 6 – Parking Service Review

3.10 Cabinet approve to a review of the role, capacity, structure and staff in the Parking Services operation.

Recommendation 7 – Parking Strategy

3.11 Cabinet approve that a new On and Off-Street Parking Strategy be developed for Cabinet approval in principle, prior to non-statutory public consultation.

145 Public Space Protection Order, Dog Constraints

The Portfolio Holder for Highways presented the report which sought Cabinet approval for the introduction of a Public Space Protection Order for Shropshire to control dog fouling, taking account of a public consultation exercise approved on 18th October 2023.

The proposal includes provisions for a publicity campaign to raise general awareness, signage, and the adequate provision of waste bins to encourage responsible dog ownership and for the disposal of dog waste. It was also intended to respond to public complaints on an intelligence-led basis, targeting hotspots through public engagement and, if necessary, enforcement.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet

1. Accepted the position as set out in this report and approved a Public Space Protection Order for Shropshire with the proposed conditions in the restricted area set out in Appendix B (“the Order”) and as defined by the map with an effective commencement date of the 1st June 2024 for a period of 3 years.
2. Delegated to the Executive Director of Place to authorise officers to issue FPN's and directions under the order and agrees that the Council use Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN), in appropriate circumstances, where there is reason to believe that an offence under the Public Space Protection Order has been committed by any person. And further that the level of the FPN is set at £100 reduced to £50 if paid within 10 days.
3. For the purpose of discharging the Order instructed the Executive Director: Place to publish and cause to be erected notices in accordance with Regulations made under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
4. Delegated authority to the Executive Director: Place to engage with any other organisation, not being part of Shropshire Council, where officers of that organisation are to be authorised by Shropshire Council to undertake enforcement responsibilities under the Order.
5. Delegated authority to the Executive Director: Place to engage with any other organisation, not being part of Shropshire Council, where officers of that organisation have been authorised by Shropshire Council to undertake enforcement responsibilities under the Order (as extended), and to define those enforcement responsibilities and any other requirements within an agreed Memorandum of Understanding and, where necessary, to amend or create any

further Memoranda of Understanding at any time during the period that the Order (as extended) is in force.

6. That in support of the Order a public education and information programme is implemented and as shown in Appendix C

146 Local Plan - Additional Material for Examination in Public

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services presented the report which sought cabinet approval to submit and consult on additional material to the local plan examination process in response to the interim findings of the appointed inspectors. The updated material provided in the appendices also sought to respond effectively to the soundness concerns of the inspectors.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet agreed the Appendices 2-4 of this report to be submitted to the Local Plan Examination and for these documents to be subject to public consultation in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
2. That Cabinet agreed that ahead of the public consultation any minor editorial changes to these documents are delegated to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services.

147 Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2024 - 2029

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets presented the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 to 2029, which focused on several outcomes and strands, including the importance of partnership working across the public and charitable sector. The strategy recognised the complexities of each individual circumstance around homelessness and rough sleeping.

Members welcomed the report and praise was given to the rough sleeping team for their excellent support.

RESOLVED:

To approve the draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, outlined in Appendix I for an 8-week public and stakeholder consultation period.

148 Whitchurch Swimming Pool - Agreement for CIL Funding

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services presented the report which sought cabinet approval to award £980,000 of self-funding towards the design and build of Whitchurch Pool and Fitness Centre. The new centre will support the economic growth in Whitchurch and provide the town with a modern facility that supports the health and well-being of the local community.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approved the allocation of £980,000 of CIL funding to support the design and build of Whitchurch Pool and Fitness Centre.

149 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with the provisions of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 [3] of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items

150 **Pyrolysis JV Proposal**

RESOLVED:

To approve the recommendations as set out in the exempt report.

151 **Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 5 June 2024.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:

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Committee and Date
Transformation &
Improvement Scrutiny
3rd June 2024

Cabinet
5th June 2024

Audit Committee
27th June 2024

Item

Public



Financial Outturn 2023/24

Responsible Officer:	James Walton		
email:	james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 258915
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Gwilym Butler, Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities		

1. Synopsis

Shropshire Council ended an exceptionally challenging financial year better than expected, with spending £7.877m outside of budget (an improvement of £6.7m compared to Quarter 3 estimates) this representing a 3.1% variance to net budget.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. This report provides a detailed review of Shropshire Council 2023/24 financial performance for revenue and capital.

2.2. The year just ended was, financially, exceptionally challenging for the Council. The budget agreed in March 2023 set the highest savings target in the Council's history and it became clear early in the year that significant demand pressures (emerging after the budget position was finalised) were persisting into the year. The previous quarterly reports have consistently set out this position, with substantial social care demand pressures and ongoing inflationary pressures juxtaposed with the most success in savings delivery yet seen.

2.3. Further success was seen between the last report (quarter 3) and this report, with a material movement in the position between forecast and final outturn, moving from

an £14.533m overspend estimated as at 31 December to a £7.877m actual overspend at 31 March within the space of only three months.

- 2.4. Despite ongoing pressures set out in the budget for the new financial year (2024/25) in the February 2024 Council papers, the results from the last financial year place the Council as well as can be expected to tackle what will undoubtedly be another highly challenging year requiring significant savings, careful management of demand pressures and reduction in overall spending.
- 2.5. The improved outturn position for the general fund balance will be carried forward to the new year. The MTFS approved by Council allowed for a further contribution of £30m to be made in 2024/25, creating a total general fund balance as at 1 April of £38m (reflected in the Period 1 report, also on this agenda). This is an improvement on the position for 2023/24 but remains below the risk-adjusted estimate for the target balance (£49m – as set out in the February 2024 MTFS) and also below the levels of balances held by similar authorities elsewhere in the country. In this sense, the levels of reserves cannot yet be considered as safe. It will be a priority in the 2024/25 year to safeguard that balance as far as possible to ensure that an adequate level of funding is held against any costs and pressures not covered in the budget estimates.
- 2.6. The key issues for the Council's financial performance in 2023/24 highlighted by this report are summarised below, **delivered within the requirements of The Shropshire Plan. The Council has:**
- a) **Substantially contained revenue expenditure within the available budget** (a variance of **£7.302m against net spending** representing 1.21% on the gross budget or 2.85% of net budget)
 - b) **Delivered £41.818m savings** (81% of the target, and by both value and percentage the highest ever achieved by the Council)
 - c) **Improved the overall financial variance when compared to that projected at Quarter 3** by £6.656m (£14.533m compared to £7.877m)
 - d) **Delivered a smaller overall overspend than delivered in the previous financial year** (£7.877m compared to £8.499m)
 - e) **Ensured the General Fund Balance has increased compared to the previous year** (£8.237m compared to £7.093m, with plans to improve this position again in 2024/25)
 - f) **Reprofiled the capital programme over the year**, aligning with revised delivery expectations, to £100.012m. Outturn capital expenditure for 2023/24 is £92.339m, representing 92.3% of the re-profiled budget. All £7.673m of the underspend has been carried forward to the 2024/25 programme.

Table 1: 2023/24 Budget Variations by Service Area (£'000)

Directorate	Revised Budget (£'000)	Controllable Outturn (£'000)	(Under)/Overspend (£'000)	(Under)/Overspend (%)	RAGY Classification
Health & Wellbeing	1,878	1,398	(480)		Y
People	198,118	206,497	8,379		R
Place	75,749	77,677	1,928		R
Resources	2,764	4,161	1,397		R
Strategic Management Board	163	303	140		R
Service Delivery Budgets	278,672	290,035	11,364	3.83%	
Corporate	(22,758)	(26,819)	(4,061)		Y
Total Net Expenditure	255,914	263,216	7,302	2.85%	
Funded By:					
Council Tax	(193,577)	(193,577)	0		
Business Rates	(39,424)	(39,424)	0		
Top Up Grant	(11,120)	(10,545)	575	5.17%	
Revenue Support Grant	(7,479)	(7,479)	0		
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	(4,314)	(4,314)	0		
Total Funding	(255,914)	(255,339)	575		
Net Total Expenditure	0	7,877	7,877	3.1%	

2.7. The key factors affecting the year end position for overall service delivery were:

- Activity in Children's Services was higher than anticipated when setting the budget. The increase in costs was partially offset by a contribution from the General Fund Balance.
- The service is bringing forward plans over the short to medium term to manage demand pressures. This includes the overhaul of Early Help, ensuring families get the support they need at the earliest possible stage. A new children's home, the fourth since 2020, reducing the use of private providers. Investment has provided support to children to return home from care, with lasting changes in place to keep families safely together. Work with schools and transport partners, enables more children to attend schools close to their homes.
- Activity in Adults' services increased when compared to budgeted levels, with costs of placements also increasing resulting in a significant cost pressure. Again, this was partially offset by a contribution from the General Fund Balance
- The service continues to implement demand management plans including a new joined-up partnership approach to help people recover more quickly after a stay in hospital and a virtual care project using assistive technology to connect residents to a virtual care team to aid independence.

2.8. Corporate budgets (including pensions costs, cost of finance, and other non-operational costs) returned an £4.061m surplus, which helped reduce the overall outturn variance to £7.877m (3.10%). This was driven by the following factors:

- Additional interest received on cash balances during 2023/24 and savings against the MRP budget as a result of managed slippage in the capital programme and higher interest rates
- Additional government grants reconciled and received at year end (£1.727m)
- Confirmed savings resulting from upfront payment of employers pension contributions

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members:
- Consider, with appropriate comment, this report and the recommendations made to Cabinet below.

- 3.2. It is recommended that Cabinet Members:

In respect of the revenue budget:

- Note that the outturn for overall variance in the year is £7.877m above budget.
- Note the consequent level of the General Fund balance is £8.237m.
- Note the service-related use of £19.424m of Earmarked Reserves & Provisions and the resulting level of earmarked reserves of £35.407m (£26.551m if the balances held by schools are excluded).
- Note the level of savings delivery achieved over the year
- Note that the combination of earmarked and un-earmarked (General) reserves of £43.644m is below a level that would be regarded as safe, taking into account local circumstances. The MTFS sets out an agreed plan to restore these balances to safer levels.

Relating to ringfenced funding:

- Note the performance of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – £0.623m (3%) deficit outturn for 2023/24 on £20.532m turnover, and the resulting level of the HRA reserve of £11.737m.
- Note the outturn for the DSG and the consequent level of the DSG reserve.
- Note that the level of school balances has decreased by £0.451m, from £7.791m in 2022/23 to £7.340m, in the financial year.

In respect of the capital programme:

- Approve net budget variations of £16.156m to the 2023/24 capital programme (in Appendix 10) and the re-profiled 2023/24 capital budget of £100.012m.
- Approve the re-profiled capital budgets of £117.776m for 2024/25, including slippage of £7.673m from 2023/24, £92.339m for 2025/26 and £48.873m for 2026/27 as detailed in Appendix 13.
- Accept the outturn expenditure set out in Appendices 11 and 12 of £92.339m, representing 92.3% of the revised capital budget for 2023/24.
- Approve retaining a balance of capital receipts set aside of £15.175m as at 31st March 2024 to generate a one-off Minimum Revenue Provision saving of £0.420m in 2024/25.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The management of the Council's Budget is a key process in ensuring the strategic risks are mitigated and the Council can carry out the business as intended and planned for within the Financial Strategy.

- 4.2. When the Council set the Financial Strategy in March 2023, which underpins this report, it took into account the requirements of the relevant legislation and any necessary service user consultation.
- 4.3. The financial results for 2023/24 are better than anticipated, but remain significantly adverse. This highlights an ongoing risk that effective action to address and improve the forecast was not able to be delivered within the year.
- 4.4. The financial position of the Council will be significantly challenged through the new year, 2024/25, as the Council must reduce planned spending from c£771m to c£709m in order to remain within available resources. This £62m spending reduction exceeds the previous year as the largest savings programme the Council has ever undertaken. Delivery will ensure that the Council is in good financial health across the coming years.
- 4.5. Several measures are being undertaken to ensure that the Council has the best chance of success in facing the challenge and to learn from performance in 2023/24, including (for the new year):
- More frequent and regularised reporting to Cabinet
 - Reporting the projected financial position from the earliest possible point of the year
 - Clearer processes for identifying budget variations and appropriate corrective actions
 - Greater visibility of financial results and projections for budget managers and Directors
 - Closer alignment between performance and financial reporting

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
Revenue budget risks – the issues underlying the outturn position remain into the next financial year	<p>The budget for 2024/25 included growth for known demand pressures and inflationary pressures. Also, any known pressures were included as growth items.</p> <p>Additional funding has been built into the General Fund for 2024/25 and so can provide some resilience for any unforeseen pressures, however it is recognised that the General Fund Balance is not at a sufficient level to provide for all potential financial risks that could occur.</p>
Capital budget risks - inflationary pressures as the construction sector in particular is often highly exposed to price increases, and programme slippages as schemes are delivered slower (or faster) than anticipated. Also risks around generation of capital receipts for funding capital schemes, and transformation costs.	The capital programme is reviewed quarterly and any updates or revisions to the capital programme are included within the review. A working group is set up to track delivery against capital receipts and progress for the year is detailed within the quarterly financial report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. This is the subject of the report. Failure to constrain spending within budgets leads to overspending, which must then be funded from un-earmarked reserves. The Council should carry un-earmarked reserves at a level of 5%-15% of turnover – or, £15m- £30m. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved by Full Council in February 2024, includes provision to increase the general fund balance (our un-earmarked reserves) to these levels, provided that all spending for the year is constrained within the budgeted levels.
- 5.2. The MTFS also included an assessment of the level of risk being faced by the authority, across all areas of financial management. This concluded that the prudent level of reserves should be £50m based on that assessment. The council is moving towards a higher level of reserves, but this in itself must be risk-assessed and balanced against the impact on revenue budgets (a contribution to reserves is an expense, which will therefore increase required savings).

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The Council's Financial Strategy supports its strategies for Climate Change and Carbon Reduction in a number of ways. The future programme includes programmes to support a range of initiatives such as moving to LED street lighting; enabling agile and mobile working (including a move to hybrid working at the Council with officers predominantly working from home which has also helped to reduce officer travel); and support for Park and Ride schemes to reduce car emissions within the town centres. A specific climate change revenue budget is held in 2023/24 and further details about spend in this area is included in Appendix 1 to this report. Several areas of spend in the climate change budget are invest-to-save or future income generating schemes such as energy generation with solar PV or building energy efficiency measures. The climate change schemes involving the Council's assets or infrastructure are included within the capital programme of which further detail can be found within Appendix 16.

7. Background

- 7.1. Budget monitoring reports are produced regularly for Executive Directors, and quarterly for Cabinet, highlighting the anticipated year end projection. The outturn report confirms the actual year end position compared to those earlier projections.
- 7.2. The monitoring reports track progress against agreed budget decisions, consider any budget changes (including re-profiling on Capital), forecast any significant variances to the budget, and enable corrective action to be taken to ensure a balanced budget at year end. Capital schemes are similarly reported on an exception basis.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. The Council approved a gross budget of £645.741m (net £255.914m) on 22nd March 2023. This included savings of £51.390m. The final outturn for 2023/24 shows controllable net revenue expenditure of £263.216m and a variance to net spending of £7.302m.

- 8.2. In addition, there has been a reduction in the value of the Top Up Grant received from the Government which makes up part of the Council's funding (£0.575m).
- 8.3. Therefore the overall financial variance, or total overspend, for the 2023/24 financial year was £7.877m.

9. Update on Savings Delivery

- 9.1. 81% of the 2023/24 savings required have been delivered. There was £9.572m of savings that have not been achieved in 2023/24. Some of these have been offset by growth in 2024/25, but any remaining will be carried forward to 2024/25 to be delivered as soon as possible. The savings outturn in 2023/24 are presented in Appendix 3. The impact on the outturn position of the savings that have not been delivered can be seen in Appendix 4.

10. Analysis of Outturn Projections including Ongoing Budget Pressures

- 10.1. The variance to net spending position in the revenue budget of £7.302m overspend (see paragraph 8.1 above) includes ongoing and new budget pressures identified. Appendix 4 reconciles the monitoring position to savings delivery.

11. General Fund Balance

- 11.1. A breakdown of transactions impacting on the General Fund in 2023/24 are detailed in Appendix 5 and this shows an increase in the balance held of £1.144m to £8.237m. The MTFS approved in March 2024 includes provision to increase this to safe levels, provided that spending is held within budgeted levels in the new financial year.

12. Housing Revenue Account

- 12.1. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) outturn for 2023/24 shows a deficit of £0.623m against a budgeted deficit of £0.274m, giving a £0.349m variance against the approved budget. This was mainly due to a higher than budgeted contribution to the capital programme coupled with increased costs of supplies and services with dwelling depreciation. The was partially offset by a larger than expected interest receipt due to higher interest rates. As at 31 March 2024 the HRA reserve stood at £11.737m. A breakdown of the HRA is provided at Appendix 7.

13. Dedicated Schools Grant

- 13.1. There was a £4.771m in-year deficit reported against the Central Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), leaving a cumulative DSG deficit of £2.590m at the end of the financial year. This in year-deficit was largely due to an in-year overspend reported on the High Needs Block of DSG totalling £4.015m. There was also an overspend of £0.351m against the Council's Schools Growth funding allocation of £0.303m, a £0.087m overspend on the Council's Early Years Block DSG allocation, as well as a £0.265m overspend reported against the Council's Central Schools Services Block DSG allocation.

- 13.2. The forecast overspend on High Needs Blocks of £4.015m is due to a significant increase in expenditure against the budget for Independent Special School placements in 2023-24. An overspend of £3.905m is reported on this budget line. There are several explanations for this. Firstly, the Council has experienced a sharp increase in demand for Independent Special School placements as evidenced by the number of new placements. This is a trend that was identified in 2022-23 but the increase has been even more pronounced in 2023-24 and particularly from the start of the 2023-24 academic year. Another trend that came to light in 2022-23 financial year, was the much more frequent use of independent alternative providers, particularly in relation to children who are post 16. Also, the average termly cost of a placement has increased in 2023-24 reflecting price inflationary pressures. The other trend which explains the overspend is that the value of, and number of contributions to complex, joint funded placements with social care and the Health has increased in 2023-24 relative to 2022-23 levels reflecting an increase in complexity. The Council has also seen a sharp increase in expenditure in 2023-24 relating to SEN Support Services.
- 13.3. A High Needs Block DSG 3 year forecast will be presented to Schools Forum in June 2024 with potential mitigations set out against the High Need Block DSG to bring the DSG financial position back into balance.

14. Reserves and Provisions

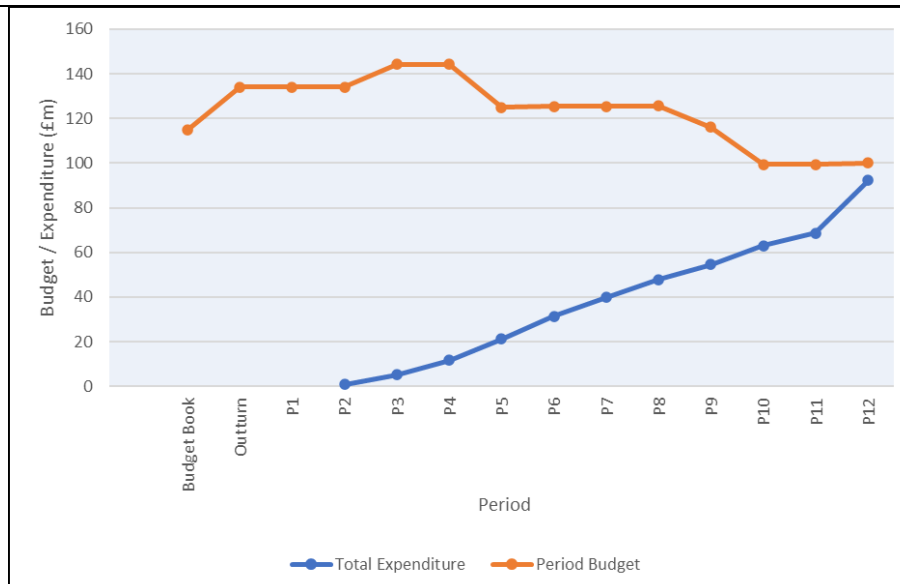
- 14.1. The overall position for reserves and provisions is set out in the Statement of Accounts 2023/24, however a detailed breakdown of the balances is contained at Appendix 8 and shows an overall reduction of £19.424m in reserves and provision (excl. delegated schools balances).

15. Original & Final Capital Programme for 2023/24

- 15.1. The capital budget for 2023/24 was subject to a review of all projects at Quarter 3 and re-profiling where required into future years with no further re-profiling into future years being anticipated during Quarter 4. However, in Quarter 4 it has been necessary to undertake further re-profiling of £20.442m. Additionally, in Quarter 4 there has been a net budget increase of £4.286m for 2023/24. In total, during Quarter 4 there has been a net budget decrease of £16.156m compared to the position reported at Quarter 3 2023/24. Appendix 9 summarises the overall movement, between that already approved and changes for Quarter 4 that require approval.

16. Capital Outturn Position

- 16.1. Outturn projections are incorporated into the capital monitor to enhance the monitoring information provided and allow the early identification where schemes are deviating from budget. Appendix 10 summarises the outturn position for 2023/24.
- 16.2. Total capital expenditure for 2023/24 was £92.339m, which equated to 92.3% of the re-profiled capital programme of £100.012m. The graph below shows actual expenditure by period and tracks the period-on-period changes to the budget.



16.3. There was a total variance of £7.673m between the revised Outturn Budget and the Outturn Expenditure. This underspend will be slipped to future years to facilitate completion of projects in delivery during in 2024-25 and beyond as required following a review of expected profiles. A summary of significant variances by directorate and service area are provided In Appendix 11.

17. Projected Future Capital Programme

17.1. Appendix 12 summarises the financing of the 2023/24 capital programme, changes made to Quarter 3 and to be approved to Quarter 4.

17.2. Within the financing of the Capital Programme £3.446m is funded from revenue contributions. The major areas of revenue contributions to capital are in ringfenced HRA monies to undertake new build schemes (£2.188m), essential repairs in relation to the Corporate Landlord estate (£0.992m) and Schools revenue contributions to various capital schemes (0.209m).

18. Projected Future Capital Programme

18.1. The updated capital programme and the financing of the programme is summarised by year in Appendix 13.

19. Capital Receipts Position

19.1. Appendix 14 summarises the current allocated and projected capital receipt position across 2023/24 to 2026/27.

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

Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2027/28

Financial Rules

Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 2023/24

Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 2 2023/24

Financial Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 2023/24

Local Member: All

Appendices [Please list the titles of Appendices]

Appendix 1 – 2023/24 Budget Variations by Service

Appendix 2 – Movement in Projections Between Q3 and Outturn

Appendix 3 – Update on Delivery of 2023/24 Savings Proposals

Appendix 4 – Reconciliation of Monitoring Projections to Savings Delivery

Appendix 5 – General Fund Balance

Appendix 6 – Amendments to Original Budget

Appendix 7 – Housing Revenue Account

Appendix 8 – Reserves and Provision 2023/24

Appendix 9 – Revised Capital Programme

Appendix 10 – Capital Programme Outturn Position by Directorate 2023/24

Appendix 11 – Summary of Significant Variances Between Revised Capital Budget & Outturn Expenditure by Directorate and Service Area For 2023-24

Appendix 12 – Revised Capital Programme Financing 2023/24

Appendix 13 – Capital Programme 2024/25 To 2026/27

Appendix 14 – Projected Capital Receipts Position

Appendix 15 – Capital Programme Summary Outturn 2023/24

APPENDIX 1

2023/24 BUDGET VARIATIONS BY SERVICE

1.1 Summary

Revenue variances are reported on an exception basis depending on the total variance from budget, and the percentage change in projection in any one period.

- Green - variance +/- 1% (or £0.05m if budget less than £5m)
- Amber - overspend between 1%-2% (or £0.05m-£0.1m if budget less than £5m)
- Red - variance over 2% (or £0.1m if budget less than £5m)
- Yellow - underspend more than 1% (or £0.05m if budget less than £5m)

Directorate	Full Year			RAGY	FOR INFORMATION ONLY		
	Revised Budget £	Controllable Outturn £	Controllable Variation £		Outturn (inc. Non Controllable* Items) £	Non Controllable* Variation £	Total Variation £
Health & Wellbeing	1,878,200	1,398,308	(479,892)	Y	1,331,258	(736,170)	(1,216,062)
People	198,117,500	206,496,416	8,378,916	R	205,352,556	(11,397,540)	(3,018,564)
Place	75,749,590	77,677,251	1,927,661	R	77,125,622	(6,261,519)	(4,333,918)
Resources	2,763,930	4,160,647	1,396,717	R	4,104,466	(805,820)	590,897
Strategic Management Board	162,730	302,428	139,698	R	296,768	(21,330)	118,368
Service Delivery Budgets	278,671,950	290,035,050	11,363,100		288,210,670	(19,222,379)	(7,859,280)
Corporate Budgets	(22,758,300)	(26,819,301)	(4,061,001)	Y	(24,990,481)	19,226,820	15,165,819
Total	255,913,650	263,215,748	7,302,098		263,220,189	4,441	7,306,539

*The non-controllable items included in the table above include items such as depreciation, impairment of assets, other capital charges and IAS19 (pension costs) that are not included within service projections throughout the year. These charges are produced at the year-end as they are calculated as part of the closedown procedures. The budgets for the year are set in the February of the preceding financial year, and rather than reallocate these budgets at the year end to match where the accounting entries are processed, we allow variations from budget to be reported instead. With the exception of insurance costs, the net effect of these variations across the Council will always be nil, as any overspends within non-controllable budgets for service areas will be offset by a Corporate underspend which reflects the statutory requirement that any variations in these budgets should not impact on the council tax payer and ultimately the Council Tax that we charge.

1.2 Detail Of Controllable Outturn And Variations By Service Area

Directorate Summary

PEOPLE		Budget	Controllable Outturn	Controllable Variance	RAGY
Total		198,117,500	206,496,415	8,378,916	R
Adult Social Care Business Support and Development	Adult Social Care and Public Health	3,765,430	3,449,266	-316,164	Y
Controllable variance equates to; (£0.290m) of capitalisation of posts to support transformational activity (£0.069m) Implementation of Supported Accommodation Reforms Grant received Increase in the provision of Bad Debt £0.040m Enable additional receipts (£0.052m) Joint Training under achievement of income £0.019 and additional expenditure on PDU £0.013m Care Cap Charging Reform £0.010m					
Adult Social Care Management	Adult Social Care and Public Health	1,117,730	748,730	-369,000	Y
Controllable variance equates to; (£0.290m) of capitalisation of posts to support transformational activity Savings as a results of vacancy management (£0.087m) £0.024m relates to low-level efficiency savings unachieved.					
Adult Social Care Provider Services	Adult Social Care and Public Health	3,933,720	4,140,665	206,945	R
External Day Service Providers, Shared Lives Contract £0.025m under achievement of Housing Benefit Income and an increase of £0.040m in payments to Private Contractors. Adults Prevention Service £0.087m being payments for British Red Cross and CUBE made to Public Health. Internal Day Services (£0.088m) and Internal Nursing Services (£0.081m) underspend due to vacancies within the service START Winter Pressure £0.262m relating to additional staffing not budgeted for.					
Adult Social Care Operations	Adult Social Care and Public Health	118,141,330	120,508,706	2,367,376	R
Transport Services £0.608m additional spend, this is made up of £0.337m Taxi Costs, Additional Agency Staff costs of £0.144m and Employee Recharge costs of £0.145m. A reduction of £0.014m in the Hire of Transport Recharges Supported Living expenditure of £0.166m relating to void properties. £15.702m gross purchasing pressure is split across base budget, where numbers of service users and cost of placements are higher than anticipated at budget setting, but lower than they were as at 1st April 2023. We have seen an increase in nursing care, highlighting a complexity in people's needs from the community and through the hospital discharge routes. We have also seen more packages of care commissioned within peoples' homes, reducing the waiting lists but costs have increased. Work is on-going with the market to manage the increased costs of care. Finally, we have seen further pressures due to the continued need to support hospital discharges and short-term care provision which has resulted in higher costs. One-off funding has been applied to offset these pressures. • (£4.277m) anticipated over achievement of client contributions to care costs. As per the pressure on expenditure, due to greater number of individuals being supported than budgeted for, we received a greater amount of contributions being collected. Non-purchasing: • (£9.500m) contribution from the General Fund. Short term funding to address demand-led pressures. • (£0.521m) Staff capitalisation as a result of undertaking transformational activity • £0.261m increase in the provision of Bad Debt					
Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	Children & Education	49,240,040	52,582,108	3,342,068	R
• £0.270m relates to low-level efficiency savings unachieved. The service used "one-off" savings in other areas to achieve this savings target this year, however further work is required to determine how to achieve this on an ongoing basis. • £1.772m overspend on staffing due to agency social workers covering staff vacancies, sickness leave and maternity leave (recruitment and retention in children's social work staffing is a nationally recognised issue). This figure includes a £0.335m one-off budget pressure from an additional capacity Social Work Team/Court Team that was brought in temporarily to cope with increased demand. It also includes £1.166m of posts capitalised as working on transformational projects e.g. Stepping Stones Project. • £6.867m overspend on external residential placement costs reflecting 57 external residential spot/framework placements as at the end of March 2024. The sharp increase in the number of residential spot/framework placements in 2022/23 means that the number of children in this type of placement far exceeds the budgeted number in 2023/24 (although this has been addressed in the 2024/25 budget). Although the increase in external residential spot/framework placements did stabilise in quarter 1, the service experienced an increase of 14 new external residential spot/framework					

placements in quarter 2 which included 2 large sibling groups. In Quarters 3 and 4, the numbers have remained fairly flat, although a lack of fostering capacity has meant that the service has experienced delays in moving children on from residential to fostering placements which has had an adverse effect on the monitoring position. In spite of a number of challenges, the Stepping Stones Project achieved cost reductions totalling £1.551m exceeding the savings target of £1.000m. This was achieved through the successful step down of 39 children to lower cost fostering placements or home. 17 of these step downs were from high-cost residential placements. In addition to that, the project avoided 75 placements which would have resulted in £2.770m of additional expenditure in 2023/24.

- £2.421m overspend on Fostering. The majority relates to External Fostering (£1.028m), partly explained by unachieved saving of £0.493m. The remaining £0.898m relates to Internal Fostering fees and allowances. There was also an overspend of £0.495m on Supported Accommodation.
- £1.018m overspend in the Disabled Children's Team (excluding staffing). £0.665m of this overspend relates to bespoke, short term care packages of prevention and support for disabled children and £0.330m relates to direct payments for disabled children. There has been a significant increase in demand, evidenced by a 300% increase in referrals. As well as an increase in the numbers of children requiring support, there has been an increase in the number of support hours per child, which indicates an increase in complexity.
- £0.309m overspend in the Leaving Care Team (excluding staffing). £0.239m of this overspend relates to accommodation costs for care leavers and allowances paid to care leavers, reflecting an increase in the number of children staying in relatively high cost supported accommodation placements beyond their 18th birthday. The remaining £0.070m relates to discretionary Council Tax relief for care leavers.
- £0.293m overspend in Adoption Services. £0.202m relates to Adoption Allowances, where there has been a significant increase in 2022/23 and 2023/24. £0.036m overspend was against the budget for intra agency adoption placements reflecting the trend across the region of more children being placed with voluntary adoption agencies.
- £0.428m overspend relates to the Public Law Outline (PLO) Support Packages budget where demand for expenditure relating to court-ordered items such as legal costs and medical assessments has increased.
- £1.059m overspend relating to other costs such as transport recharges and taxi costs, childcare payments, parenting assessments and interpreting fees. These costs have increased in line with the increase in demand.
- A contribution of £11.000m from the General Fund was built in in 2023/24 as one-off funding to address demand-led pressures. The service is adopting a number of strategies to address the recurrent budget pressures, particularly around residential placements e.g. the Stepping Stones Project and increasing internal foster care capacity. There is acknowledgement that demand has increased significantly over the last few years so there is emphasis on preventing demand in to the social care system early through family support. This is being progressed through the "Best Start in Life", "Integration" and "Early Help Transformation" projects.

Children's Early Help, Partnerships and Commissioning	Children & Education	3,268,140	2,852,401	-415,739	Y
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- The majority of the underspend (£0.241m) is due to delays in recruiting staff to vacancies within the Early Help Family Hubs. The service is undergoing a major restructure to be implemented in the Summer of 2024 so these posts will be filled on an ongoing basis.
- £0.020m of underspend relates to premises related costs such as Rates and building rental charges and other supplies and services.
- In 2023/24, the service used a £0.161m one-off contribution from Supporting Families Grant to fund staff within the Early Help Family Hubs. This measure was taken to achieve a 5% staff turnover savings target in 2023/24 until the saving is achieved on an ongoing basis through the Early Help restructure. The £0.161m savings target line sits within the People Directorate Management although it relates to Early Help.

Learning and Skills	Children & Education	18,190,420	19,229,547	1,039,127	R
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- £1.022m of overspend relates to Home to School Transport budget where the budget is £13.676m. The service achieved savings totalling £0.202m against TMBSS transport through a network review and the value of this saving will be higher for 2024/25 when the full year effect of the saving is realised. A £0.100m savings target on SEND Transport was also delivered. Despite this, the service has experienced a large increase in the number of routes/journeys paid for, particularly in the SEND Transport budget areas where the Council has seen a large increase in the number of pupils with SEND being placed at Independent Special Schools. £0.717m of the £1.022m overspend related to Special home to school transport, £0.214m relates to Mainstream school transport and £0.091m to the Children's transport fleet. This financial year has seen an acceleration of the trend experienced in 2022/23.
- £0.082m overspend relates to the Council's Fully Traded Schools Library Service as the income from schools did not cover the expenditure of running the service. The outturn position was negatively impacted by some one-off staffing costs, without which the deficit would have been £0.058m.
- £0.100m overspend relates to ongoing cost commitments that the service has in relation to former Teacher's Pension payments. These cost commitments were entered into many years ago and have increased in line with inflation.
- Partially offsetting these overspends, an underspend of £0.055m is reported within Learning & Skills Business Support relating to the use of capital receipts funding against a post on the basis that this post has been identified as working on a transformational project, one-off in this financial year.
- There was a £0.090m underspend on staffing within several Schools Support Services due to temporary vacancies. Some of this underspend relates to a vacant post within the Council's NEETs data tracking team.

People Directorate Management	Adult Social Care and Public Health	460,690	2,984,994	2,524,304	R
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The forecast overspend relates to unachieved local shares of organisation wide savings targets.

PLACE		Budget	Controllable Outturn	Controllable Variance	RAGY
Total		75,749,590	77,677,251	1,927,661	R
Housing Services	Housing and Assets	4,269,970	4,707,740	437,770	R
Housing Services have worked hard to reduce the numbers in B&B currently 125, as well as driving down accommodation costs for each placement. This work is ongoing alongside a number of temporary accommodation projects in the pipeline. Further to this, costs have been reduced for a range of support services, and a restructure is now planned to deliver staffing efficiencies. Overspend on Housing Service of £0.438m due to additional costs on Care Management and Temporary accommodation.					
Bereavement Services	Planning and Regulatory Services	-242,040	-257,935	-15,895	Y
Minor Variance from Budget at outturn					
Business and Consumer Protection	Planning and Regulatory Services	1,989,670	1,671,416	-318,254	Y
Additional income from Licences and Blue Badges and some staffing vacancy savings					
Registrars and Coroners	Planning and Regulatory Services	565,950	406,325	-159,625	Y
Large increase in advance bookings and service delivery offset in part by additional costs					
Assistant Director Commercial Services	Housing and Assets	50,080	162,975	112,895	R
Overspend of £0.111m relating to undelivered Getting Leadership Right savings					
Corporate Landlord, Property and Development	Housing and Assets	3,431,290	1,987,472	-1,443,818	Y
Reserves used to offset some unachievable savings targets in-year. £1.400m rates rebate received in-year due to revaluation of a number of properties plus savings and additional income achieved by Darwin Shopping Centre.					
Shire Services	Housing and Assets	0	62,245	62,245	A
Overspend of £0.062m resulting from 'one off' staff restructuring costs					
Director of Place	Housing and Assets	-752,141	591,860	1,344,001	R
Unachieved savings targets which were Council Wide, some have been partly achieved across the service areas					
Assistant Director Economy & Place	Growth and Regeneration	164,630	311,170	146,540	R
Overspend relating to undelivered Getting Leadership Right savings and cost of office alterations in the Darwin Centre.					
Planning Services	Planning and Regulatory Services	701,200	1,198,896	497,696	R
Reduced income from planning applications (mainly major applications) and land charges (search) income, this has been offset by staffing savings, reduced expenditure on contractors and use of reserves.					
Economic Growth	Growth and Regeneration	1,320,700	1,190,544	-130,156	Y
Underspend from staff vacancies, grant income received and use of reserves					
Broadband	Culture and Digital	174,190	130,287	-43,903	Y
Staffing savings resulting from a reduction in hours and vacancy, and capitalisation of some costs					
Policy and Environment	Planning and Regulatory Services	1,919,870	1,845,672	-74,198	Y
Savings on vacancy management and use of reserves					
Shrewsbury Shopping Centres (Commercial)	Growth and Regeneration	100	-	-100	Y
Minor variance from budget at outturn					
Culture, Leisure & Tourism Development	Culture and Digital	19,320	3,420	-15,900	Y
Minor variance from budget at outturn					

PLACE		Budget	Controllable Outturn	Controllable Variance	RAGY
Highways & Transport	Highways	17,567,760	17,124,577	-443,183	Y
Use of transport grants, release of transport provision (no-longer required) and managing the programme of works to maximise savings					
Shropshire Hills National Landscape	Culture and Digital	38,710	38,709	-1	G
Minor variance from budget at outturn					
Outdoor Partnerships	Culture and Digital	1,245,121	1,301,422	56,301	A
Reduction in parking income and variances against employee related expenditure.					
Leisure	Culture and Digital	1,801,910	2,391,684	589,774	R
Large variances due to closures and maintenance of centres, resulting in compensation charges and utilising casual staff, without which centres could not open					
Libraries	Culture and Digital	3,362,630	3,393,947	31,317	G
Libraries overspend £0.031m multiple smaller variances across various sites, but largely attributable to lower income than expected and redundancy costs					
Museums and Archives	Culture and Digital	1,233,450	1,111,537	-121,913	Y
Museums and archives -£0.122m largely due to the Invest to Save project to support the transfer of Acton Scott Historic Working Farm.					
Theatre Services	Culture and Digital	228,810	-310,539	-539,349	Y
Overall services generated additional (net) income (excellent levels of admissions and lettings, combined with a lower proportion of production costs).					
Waste Management	Deputy Leader, Climate Change, Environment and Transport	33,843,980	35,841,882	1,997,902	R
Includes £4.125m outstanding Waste PFI saving, some of which has been found in-year and partly offset by £400k contribution from Energy Share					
Assistant Director Highways and Transport	Highways	101,180	272,839	171,659	R
Overspend relating to undelivered low-level efficiency savings.					
Commercial Services Business Development	Housing and Assets	94,290	149,521	55,231	A
Shortfall on Sponsorship income budget offset by salary contribution from capital					
Head of Culture, Leisure & Tourism	Culture and Digital	682,640	305,729	-376,911	Y
Restructure and reduction of Senior Management Team with fewer posts, supplemented by used of Reserves to support some leisure activities.					
Climate Change	Deputy Leader, Climate Change, Environment and Transport	-30,700	-7,440	23,260	G
Minor variance from budget at outturn.					
Highway Policy & Strategic Infrastructure	Deputy Leader, Climate Change, Environment and Transport	2,097,710	1,845,909	-251,801	Y
Reduction achieved through grant received and use of reserves.					
Assistant Director Homes and Communities	Housing and Assets	-181,720	160,029	341,749	R
Overspend on AD Homes & Communities £0.341m (£0.135m of which is unachieved GLR savings, £0.112m reduced capital recharges, £0.079m unachieved savings achieved elsewhere in Place directorate and £0.015m overspend on Shropshire Local)					
Housing Development and HRA	Housing and Assets	51,030	45,359	-5,671	Y
Minor variance from budget at outturn.					

RESOURCES		Budget	YTD Actuals	Controllable Variance	RAGY
Total		2,763,930	4,160,657	1,396,717	R
Automation and Technology	Culture and Digital	211,950	-489,903	-701,853	Y
Savings were delivered in year from a combination of contract management, efficiencies across supplies and services, and vacancy management alongside capitalisation of posts undertaking transformational activities.					
Communications & Engagement	Leader, Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications	626,180	-142,531	-768,711	Y
Unachieved savings relating to CCTV Partnership funding and getting leadership right have been offset by additional turnover within the service area and capitalisation of posts undertaking transformational activities					
Business Improvement: Data, Analysis and Intelligence	Culture and Digital	-18,300	-46,431	-28,131	Y
Minor variance from budget at outturn which relates to vacancy management savings.					
Human Resources and Organisational Development	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	-84,950	-8,991	75,958	A
Unachieved savings targets of £0.118m regarding de-prioritised efficiency savings. SLA income pressures identified within the service of £0.135m have been partly offset by savings from planned vacancy management and anticipated additional income generated from training courses within Health and Safety on a one-off basis.					
Finance	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	2,146,050	2,560,926	414,876	R
There were unachieved savings targets relating to efficiency review targets, these were partly offset by savings efficiencies across supplies and services, and vacancy management.					
Pensions	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	-3,930	132,282	136,212	R
It had been anticipated that all costs would be rechargeable to the Shropshire County Pension Fund (SCPF), however, some staff time was allocated to supporting Shropshire Council treasury management tasks in year and was not chargeable to SCPF as anticipated.					
Commissioning Development and Procurement	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	-213,520	-253,973	-40,453	Y
Savings were delivered in year from a combination of contract management, efficiencies across supplies and services, and vacancy management.					
Risk Management	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	-14,130	-14,175	-45	Y
Minor variance from budget at outturn.					
Democratic Services	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	231,850	99,931	-131,919	Y
Savings within Democratic Services across supplies and services budgets of (£0.130m).					
Elections	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	560,220	533,915	-26,305	Y
In year savings relating to vacancy management and across supplies and services budgets totalling (£0.049m).					
Legal Services	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	-219,250	182,508	401,758	R
Vacancy management savings within legal services budget and savings against Legal disbursement charges have been offset by spend on locum costs, and counsel fees in relation to covering a very significant rise in the number and complexity of legal childcare cases.					

RESOURCES		Budget	YTD Actuals	Controllable Variance	RAGY
Policy and Governance	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	-69,650	-144,092	-74,442	Y
Savings have been delivered in year from budgets held for brought in service support, supplies and services and additional income generation.					
Resources Management Team	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	-971,470	-74,622	896,848	R
There were unachieved savings targets of £0.979m, these were partly offset by the receipt of additional grant and income at year end.					
Housing Benefits	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	512,130	1,728,166	1,216,036	R
There were unachieved savings targets of £1.000m from a reduction in housing benefit subsidy loss from accommodating people in B&B accommodation to prevent homelessness, this saving has been undeliverable in-year, however solutions are being investigated as to how this can be moved forwards by housing in future years.					
Scrutiny	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	70,750	97,637	26,887	G
Minor variance from budget at outturn.					

CORPORATE		Budget	Controllable Outturn	Controllable Variance	RAGY
Total		-22,758,300	-26,819,301	-4,061,001	Y
Corporate Budgets	Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	-22,758,300	-26,819,301	-4,061,001	Y
At year end £2.303m of Organisation Wide savings were unachieved, and £0.214m unachieved PFI savings, these have been offset by combined savings of (£0.013m) against non-distributable costs and corporate subscriptions, (£3.594m) from interest receivable and payable, MRP one off savings of (£0.592m), and (£0.572m) capital receipts set aside saving (one-off) for 23/24. Additionally at year end additional Section 31 as a result of an additional multiplier payment was received of £1.167m, as well as additional Levy Surplus Grant (£0.428m) and Business Rates Green Plant & Machinery Grant (£0.127m), and realisation of the benefit from paying the pension contributions upfront of £0.465m. There were additional savings realised in year from a reduction in the contribution to the costs of Transformation due to the ability to utilise capital funding towards the costs.					

HEALTH & WELLBEING		Budget	Controllable Outturn	Controllable Variance	RAGY
Total		1,878,200	1,398,308	-479,892	Y
Regulatory Services	Planning and Regulatory Services	1,878,200	1,403,308	-474,892	Y
Controllable variance £0.475m - The Director of Public health agreed that a further £0.461m of the Public Health Grant should be used to fund activities delivering public health outcomes within Regulatory Services including Community Safety. The balance of favourable variances is due to prudent use of discretionary budgets.					
Ring Fenced Public Health Services	Adult Social Care and Public Health	0	-5,000	-5,000	Y
<p>Minor variance to budget at year end.</p> <p>However, the directorate has been able to identify £0.946m of its expenditure as transformational and this has enabled it to use this amount to embed prevention and wellbeing into services provided by other directorates, improving outcomes and reducing the corporate overspend by £0.426m in Regulatory services and by £0.407m in the Resources (customer) directorate, through a monitored and managed process of substitutions in line with the grant Terms and Conditions.</p> <p>The Directorate also has been able to access £1.329m of additional grant funding for its work with people involved with substance misuse.</p> <p>The Public Health Grant reserve balance was £4.215m at the start of the year and £1.127m has been utilised in 23/24. There is a clear plan for the utilisation of the balance of £3.088m over the coming two years aligned to Public Health Outcomes and OHID priorities and conditions.</p> <p>The directorate has been able to invest over £3m more than the Public Health Grant in Public Health outcomes in the year through the mechanisms outlined above.</p>					

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT BOARD		Budget	YTD Actuals	Controllable Variance	RAGY
Total		162,730	318,098	139,698	R
Chief Executive & PAs	Leader, Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications	145,770	149,439	3,669	G
Minor variance from budget at outturn.					
Programme Management	Leader, Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications	16,960	152,990	136,030	R
The programme management office is focused on delivering transformation across the organisation, it had initially been anticipated that all costs would be able to be capitalised, however following a detailed review of transactions it was determined that some would not be eligible under the capitalisation direction.					

1.3 2023/24 REVENUE OUTTURN BY PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Portfolio Holder	Full Year		
	Revised Budget £'000	Controllable Outturn £'000	Controllable Variance £'000
Portfolio Holder Adult Social Care and Public Health	131,071	135,480	4,409
Portfolio Holder Children and Education	77,688	81,653	3,965
Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Climate Change, Environment and Transport	36,032	37,801	1,769
Portfolio Holder Housing and Assets	9,379	10,276	898
Portfolio Holder Growth and Regeneration	1,690	1,707	16
Portfolio Holder Highways	18,408	18,136	(272)
Portfolio Holder Planning and Regulatory Services	8,363	7,818	(545)
Leader and Portfolio Holder Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications	896	267	(629)
Portfolio Holder Culture and Digital	9,993	8,849	(1,144)
Portfolio Holder Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities	(37,607)	(38,772)	(1,165)
Total	255,914	263,216	7,302

APPENDIX 2

MOVEMENT IN PROJECTIONS BETWEEN Q3 AND OUTTURN

Directorate	Q3 Controllable Variance £'000	Outturn Controllable Variance £'000	Movement £'000	Key Reasons for Movement
Health & Wellbeing	(12)	(480)	(467)	The Director of Public health agreed that a further £0.461m of the Public Health Grant should be used to fund activities within Regulatory Services that deliver public health outcomes. The balance of favourable variances is due to prudent use of discretionary budgets.
People	7,955	8,379	424	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •£0.261m to increase Bad Debt provision across Adult Social Care. •£0.336m Increase in Short Term back dated contracts •(£0.933m) Contribution received Hospital Discharge Gap • (£0.069m) Implementation of Supported Accommodation Reforms Grant received • (£0.076m) decrease relates to a release of Bad Debt provision • (£0.048m) net decrease relates to staffing including; an increase in the value of the credit received from the capitalisation of posts working on transformational projects; and an increase in staffing costs across Social Work Teams, including further Social Worker retention payments. • £0.173m increase relates to Internal Residential Homes • £0.125m increase in overspend on Disabled Children's Team; DCT Prevention and Support payments (£0.081m) and DCT Direct Payments (£0.080m) • £0.138m increase in overspend on 16-18 Supported Accommodation • (£0.089m) decrease in Leaving Care accommodation/allowances • (£0.083m) decrease in overall expenditure on External Residential Placements • £0.568m increase in Home to School Transport due to an increase in demand particularly on SEND Transport • £0.100m increase against former Teacher's Pension compensation payments
Place	3,545	1,928	(1,617)	<p>Rates rebates on multiple properties for multiple years across Corporate Landlord.</p> <p>Additional unplanned spend within Property Services Group and Corporate Landlord (inc. £0.052m RAC in Whitchurch and various other one off's) plus additional income received at Darwin Shopping Centre.</p> <p>Shire Services £0.060m due to one-off costs associated with staffing re-structure.</p> <p>Application of additional grant income received and use of reserves across Economy and Place.</p> <p>Greater projections in relation to staff capitalisation across Highways.</p>

				<p>£0.177m variance to Q3 in Housing due to increased costs on Care Management and Temporary accommodation, and £0.101m adverse variance on Assistant Director of Homes & Communities due to reduction in staff capitalisation assumptions, savings achieved elsewhere in place and overspend on Shropshire Local.</p> <p>Business Consumer Protection generated greater income from PCNs, taxi badges and private hire vehicles than anticipated by -£0.170m, Theatre Services improvement due to lower production costs and lettings -£0.0401m, Leisure Services position improved by -£0.283m due to capitalisation of staff undertaking transformational activities.</p>
Resources	2,877	1,397	(1,481)	<p>Assumed capitalisation of ICT staffing built in (£0.637m) of which (£0.300m) is attributable to the customer programme, and additional Household Support Fund grant drawdown in Revenues & Benefits.</p> <p>Not all cost for Treasury Management able to be recharged to the Pension Fund as originally forecast.</p> <p>At P10 Public Health grant substitution of (£608k) was applied on a one-off basis across appropriate areas of customer journey savings. Review of staff capitalisation across the service, application of grant income and additional income alongside prudent review of discretionary budgets across Communications and Engagement.</p> <p>Additional grant income of (£0.111m) relating to Apprenticeship Levy applied at year end.</p>
Strategic Management Board	(2)	140	142	<p>Staff capitalisation on transformation projects has been applied 2023/24 (£0.117m) - capped at 80% of staff time – some initial projections were based on 100% staff time being capitalised.</p>
Corporate Budgets	(404)	(4,061)	(3,657)	<p>Additional government grant income of (£1.693m), (£1.156m) of additional interest receivable/payment, and reduced contribution to transformation costs as a result of utilisation of capital funding for transformation costs.</p>
Total	13,959	7,302	(6,657)	

APPENDIX 3

UPDATE ON DELIVERY OF 2023/24 SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Summary

The savings delivered for 2023/24 are detailed in the table below:

Directorate	Delivered £'000	Savings not delivered £'000	Total £'000
Health & Wellbeing	653	0	653
People	22,005	(700)*	21,304
Place	12,391	4,551	16,942
Resources	4,070	1,957	6,027
Strategic Management Board	0	0	0
Corporate Budgets	2,700	3,764	6,464
Total	41,818	9,572	51,390

*Note: Overall the People directorate overachieved their savings target in 23/24, some of this delivery has been met one-off during the year and as a result will be a target rolled over into 24/25 to achieve on an ongoing basis. More detail is provided below.

Detail of the savings not delivered are provided below:

Saving Reference and Description	Savings not delivered £'000	Comments
Health & Wellbeing Savings of £0.160m were delivered as one-off savings in 23/24 and will therefore need to be delivered in 24/25. These are as follows: EFF03 - Removal of budgets for vacant posts (£0.062m) EFF105 -Target Operating Model/Workforce Strategy – Getting Leadership Right – cashable benefit of improved organisation-wide performance management (£0.087m) EFF101 - Target Operating Model – staffing budget turnover and wastage increase by 5% (£0.011m)	0	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
People EFF09 – Removal of budgets for vacant posts (avg. 3%) EFF14 - Prevent the need for residential care EFF20 – Reduce transport costs through improved efficiencies EFF27 – Review arrangements for personal budgets EFF40 – Contract review for supported living EFF101 – Target Operating Model – staffing budget turnover and wastage increase by 5% (year-end review). EFF105 – Target Operating Model/Workforce Strategy – Getting Leadership Right – cashable	(700)* 25 522 274 54 7 316 138	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery

Saving Reference and Description	Savings not delivered £'000	Comments
benefit of improved organisation-wide performance management		
Overachievement against other savings targets within People	(2,036)	Overachievement in 23/24 **
Place	4,551	
EFF44 - Review PFI contract costs to secure greater efficiency	2,128	Revised saving proposals built into budget to offset this saving in 24/25
EFF59 - Review of youth centres and other accommodation used for youth activities	36	Growth built into 2024/25 to remove unachievable saving.
EFF18 - Decreased use of B&B accommodation as temporary accommodation for 2022/23 (including associated costs) in view of current action to reduce or divert demand.	344	Growth built into 2024/25 to remove proportion of unachievable saving. Remainder will be carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
EFF101 - Target Operating Model - staffing budget turnover and wastage increase by 5% (year-end review).	1,448	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
EFF105 - Target Operating Model/Workforce Strategy - Getting Leadership Right - cashable benefit of improved organisation-wide performance management	595	Growth built into 2024/25 to remove proportion of unachievable saving. Remainder will be carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
Resources	1,957	
EFF79 - Reduce housing benefit subsidy loss arising from use of expensive bed and breakfast accommodation	1,000	Growth built into 2024/25 to remove unachievable saving.
EFF82 - Legal and Governance restructure to include deletion of some vacant posts and the movement of others into transformation	67	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
EFF86 - Contract rebates and spending reductions	28	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
EFF87 - Operating Model - Digital County - Reduce/remove uneconomical Service Delivery	100	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
EFF88 - Review of single person discount and housing benefit applications against data warehouse to reduce error and fraud.	100	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
EFF89 - CCTV provision and management - Seek partner funding contributions	75	
EFF105 - Target Operating Model/Workforce Strategy - Getting Leadership Right - cashable benefit of improved organisation-wide performance management	587	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
Strategic Management Board	0	
Corporate Budgets	3,764	
EFF100 - Review PFI contract costs to secure greater efficiency	214	Growth built into 2024/25 to remove unachievable saving.
EFF103 - Target Operating Model - Transformation partner delivers 4 x end-to-end process reviews yielding £0.5m per project.	2,000	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
EFF107 - Contract Spend Analysis and Contract Management Review	50	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
EFF108 - Application of corporate grants	1,500	Carried forward to 2024/25 for delivery
Total	9,572	

APPENDIX 4

RECONCILIATION OF OUTTURN POSITION TO SAVINGS DELIVERY AND PRESSURES IDENTIFIED

	Outturn Variance (Controllable) £000	Savings Pressure in 2023/24 £000	Ongoing Monitoring Pressures Identified £000	Ongoing Monitoring Savings Identified £000	One Off Monitoring Pressures Identified £000	One Off Monitoring Savings Identified £000
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Corporate Budgets

Corporate Budgets	(4,061)	3,764	0	0	189	(8,014)
	(4,061)	3,764	0	0	189	(8,014)

Health and Wellbeing

Regulatory Services	(475)	0	0	0	489	(964)
Ring Fenced Public Health Services	(5)	0	0	0	3,551	(3,556)
	(480)	0	0	0	4,040	(4,520)

People

Adult Social Care Business Support and Development	(316)	0	83	0	14	(413)
Adult Social Care Management	(369)	0	24	0	0	(393)
Adult Social Care Provider Services	207	0	0	0	396	(189)
Adult Social Care Operations	2,367	(1,081)	12,517	0	775	(9,843)
Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	3,343	0	8,165	0	9,678	(14,500)
Children's Early Help, Partnerships and Commissioning	(416)	0	0	0	70	(487)
Learning and Skills	1,039	0	0	0	1,229	(190)
People Directorate Management	2,524	381	0	0	2,186	(43)
	8,379	(700)	20,789	0	14,348	(26,058)

Place

Housing Services	438	344	520	0	419	(845)
Bereavement Services	(16)	0	0	0	0	(16)
Business and Consumer Protection	(318)	0	0	0	0	(318)
Registrars and Coroners	(160)	0	0	0	0	(160)
Assistant Director Commercial Services	113	111	0	0	2	
Corporate Landlord, Property and Development	(1,451)	36	0	0	0	(1,487)
Shire Services	62	0	0	0	8	54
Director of Place	1,344	1,459	0	0	0	(115)
Assistant Director Economy & Place	146	103	0	0	43	0
Planning Services	498	0	0	0	498	0
Economic Growth	(130)	0	0	0	0	(130)
Broadband	(44)	0	0	0	0	(44)
Policy and Environment	(74)	0	0	0	0	(74)
Shrewsbury Shopping Centres (Commercial)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culture, Leisure & Tourism Development	(16)	0	0	0	0	(16)

	Outturn Variance (Controllable) £000	Savings Pressure in 2023/24 £000	Ongoing Monitoring Pressures Identified £000	Ongoing Monitoring Savings Identified £000	One Off Monitoring Pressures Identified £000	One Off Monitoring Savings Identified £000
Highways & Transport	(443)	0	0	0	0	(443)
Shropshire Hills AONB	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outdoor Partnerships	63	0	0	0	47	16
Leisure	590	0	195		395	0
Libraries	31	0	0	0	0	31
Museums and Archives	(122)	0	0	0	0	(122)
Theatre Services	(539)	0	0	0	0	(539)
Waste Management	1,998	2,128	0	0	178	(308)
Assistant Director Highway and Transport	172	175	0	0	0	(3)
Commercial Services Business Development	55	0	0	0	0	55
Head of Culture, Leisure & Tourism	(377)	0	0	0	0	(377)
Climate Change	23	0	0	0	0	23
Highway Policy & Strategic Infrastructure	(252)	0	0	0	0	(252)
Assistant Director Homes and Communities	342	195	0	0	204	(57)
Housing Development and HRA	(6)	0	0	0	0	(6)
	1,926	4,551	715	0	1,794	(5,133)

Resources

Automation and Technology	-702	0	0	0	183	(885)
Communications & Engagement	-769	123	0	0	54	(946)
Business Improvement: Data, Analysis and Intelligence	-28	0	0	0	5	(33)
Human Resources and Organisational Development	76	117	0	0	141	(182)
Finance	380	579	0	0	139	(338)
Pensions	171	0	0	0	171	0
Commissioning Development and Procurement	-40	0	0	0	0	(40)
Risk Management	0	0	0	0	0	0
Democratic Services	-132	0	0	0	0	(132)
Elections	-26	0	0	0	62	(88)
Legal Services	402	76	0	0	508	(182)
Policy & Governance	-74	82	0	0	115	(271)
Resources Management Team	897	(20)	1,000	0	65	(148)
Housing Benefits	1,216	1,000	341	0	0	(125)
Scrutiny	27	0	0	0	27	0
	1,398	1,957	1,341	0	1,470	(3,370)

Strategic Management Board

Chief Executive & PAs	4	0	0	0	0	4
Programme Management	136	0	0	0	136	0
	140	0	0	0	136	4

TOTAL

7,302	9,572	22,845	0	21,977	(47,091)
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APPENDIX 5

GENERAL FUND BALANCE

- 5.1 The General Fund reserve at 31st March 2023 stood at £7.093m, below the target level which is £15m-£30m as a minimum. The 2023/24 budget strategy included a contribution of £19.868m to the General Fund balance which would then reach £26.961m.
- 5.2 It is essential that the Council retains the General Fund Balance in order to be able to mitigate any unforeseen shocks (such as ongoing inflationary increases, climate events such as flooding and drought, or rapid reductions in available resources due to changed national policy). Independent advice is that General Fund un-earmarked reserves should equate to 5%- 10% of net spending.
- 5.3 At Quarter 3 it was agreed that £20.5m of the General Fund Balance would be released to the People directorate to fund demand pressures within Social Care, whilst the directorate implements demand management plans that will help to control demand for these services in the future.
- 5.4 It was also agreed that a detailed review of earmarked reserves would be performed to see if these could be released to the General Fund to offset this demand pressure in year. This exercise is now complete and £9.658m has been released from earmarked reserves, resulting in a net contribution to the General Fund of £10.842m for demand pressures to release funding to the General Fund.
- 5.5 The outturn of £7.877m has also been a cost pressure against the General Fund.
- 5.6 In 2019/20 – 2022/23, the General Fund was used to offset Shire Services' deficit outturn position, as the Shire Services' earmarked reserve had been fully utilised in 2019/20. This use of the General Fund effectively represents a loan to Shire Services which must be repaid. The General Fund has been used again in 2023/24 to offset Shire Services' unfunded deficit (£0.121m), following a further year in which the service has been unable to repay the General Fund contribution made in the last 4 years. Therefore, the total loan now stands at £1.463m, and it is still intended that this will be repaid within a reasonable time frame.

General Fund	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 st April 2023		7,093
Budgeted Contribution to GF		19,868
Demand Pressure	(20,500)	
Release of earmarked reserves	9,658	
Net release to fund demand pressure		(10,842)
Controllable Overspend*		(7,877)
Non controllable Insurance overspend		(5)
Balance at 31 March 2024		8,237

* The unfunded deficit for Shire Services referred to in para. 5.6 is included within the controllable overspend of £7.877m.

APPENDIX 6

AMENDMENTS TO ORIGINAL BUDGET 2023/24

	Total £'000	Health & Wellbeing £'000	People £'000	Place £'000	Resources £'000	Strategic Management Board £'000	Corporate Budgets £'000
Original Budget as Agreed by Council	255,914	2,038	200,478	77,124	3,827	39	(27,593)
<u>Quarter 1</u>							
Structure Changes	0	(199)	(3,332)	(1,932)	(1,269)	105	6,627
Virements	0	0	(85)	85	0	0	0
<u>Quarter 2</u>							
Structure Changes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virements	0	0	450	(104)	(212)	5	(139)
<u>Quarter 3</u>							
Structure Changes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virements	0	39	604	578	418	13	(1,651)
<u>Quarter 4</u>							
Structure Changes:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Virements:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revised Budget	255,914	1,878	198,115	75,751	2,764	162	(22,756)

APPENDIX 7

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2023/24

As at 31 March 2024	Original Budget £	Outturn £	Variance Adverse/ (Favourable) £
Income			
Dwellings Rent	(19,547,030)	(19,356,453)	190,577
Garage Rent	(95,300)	(97,499)	(2,199)
Other Rent	(30,000)	(27,740)	2,260
Charges for Services	(735,380)	(1,050,415)	(315,035)
Total Income	(20,407,710)	(20,532,107)	(124,397)
Expenditure			
ALMO Management Fee	9,663,160	9,663,160	0
Supplies and Services	683,600	942,163	258,563
Capital Charges – Dwelling Depreciation	4,471,690	4,889,368	417,678
Capital Charges – Depreciation Other	261,670	245,300	(16,370)
Repairs charged to revenue	625,000	600,760	(24,240)
Revenue Financing Capital Expenditure	1,013,410	2,188,432	1,175,022
New Development Feasibility	250,000	48,528	(201,472)
Increase in Bad Debt Provision	50,000	45,000	(5,000)
Corporate & Democratic Core	357,520	419,521	62,001
Total Expenditure	17,376,050	19,042,232	1,666,182
Net Cost of Services	(3,031,660)	(1,489,875)	1,541,785
Interest Paid	3,305,270	2,112,571	(1,192,699)
Net Operating Expenditure	273,610	622,696	349,086
Net Cost of Service/(Surplus) for Year	273,610	622,696	349,086
HRA Reserve			
B/Fwd 1 April	(12,359,314)	(12,359,314)	0
(Surplus)/Deficit for year	273,610	622,696	349,086
C/Fwd 31 March	(12,085,704)	(11,736,618)	349,086

APPENDIX 8

EARMARKED RESERVES

8.1 The change in revenue reserves and provisions are detailed in the table below and shows a reduction in the overall reserves and provisions held.

Movement in Reserves and Provisions 2023/24

	Reserves £'000	Provisions £'000	Bad Debt Provisions £'000	Total Reserves and Provisions £'000
As at 31 March 2023	52,579	12,240	21,044	85,863
As at 31 March 2024	35,407	8,955	22,077	66,439
Increase/(Decrease)	(17,172)	(3,285)	1,033	(19,424)
Delegated School Balances Movement	(3,147)	0	0	(3,147)
Increase/Decrease) (excluding Delegated School Balances)	(14,025)	(3,285)	1,033	(16,277)

Schedule of Earmarked Reserves and Provisions:

	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward (£'000)	Expenditure in 2023/24 (£'000)	Income in 2023/24 (£'000)	Balance Carried Forward (£'000)
Reserves					
Sums set aside for major schemes, such as capital developments, or to fund major reorganisation					
Redundancy	Required to meet one-off costs arising from approved staffing reductions, allowing the full approved savings in salaries or wages to reach the revenue account.	0	-55	2,055	2,000
Revenue Commitments for Future Capital Expenditure	Comprises of underspends against budgeted revenue contributions available for capital schemes. The underspends have arisen due to slippage in capital schemes or because other funding streams were utilised during the year so as to maximise time limited grants.	3,815	-654	37	3,199
Development Reserve	Required to fund development projects or training that will deliver efficiency savings.	8,862	-10,099	6,933	5,696
Invest to save Reserve	Required to fund invest to save projects in order to deliver the service transformation programme.	2,070	-1,400	709	1,379
		14,747	-12,208	9,735	12,274
Insurance Reserves					
Fire Liability	Required to meet the cost of excesses on all council properties.	2,216	-1,528	362	1,051

	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward (£'000)	Expenditure in 2023/24 (£'000)	Income in 2023/24 (£'000)	Balance Carried Forward (£'000)
Motor Insurance	An internally operated self-insurance reserve to meet costs not covered by the Council's Motor Insurance Policy.	1,420	-1,054	168	533
		3,636	-2,582	529	1,584
Reserves of trading and business units					
Shire Catering and Cleaning Efficiency	Built up from trading surpluses to invest in new initiatives, to meet exceptional unbudgeted costs or cover any trading deficits.	0	-5	5	0
		0	-5	5	0
Reserves retained for service departmental use					
Building Control	Required to manage the position regarding building control charges.	424	-113	0	311
Care Act & IBCF Reserve	Required to fund the costs of implementing the Care Act requirements within the Council. This will be committed to the costs of one off posts required to implement the changes and training costs for staff within Adult Services. Plus unspent IBCF monies required to fund the IBCF programme in future years.	1,968	-1,426	480	1,022
Economic Development Workshops Major Maintenance	Established to meet the costs of major maintenance of Economic Development Workshops.	149	0	0	149
External Fund Reserve	Reserves held where the Council is the administering body for trust funds or partnership working.	2,698	-700	127	2,125
Financial Strategy Reserve	Established specifically to provide one off funding for savings proposals in the Financial Strategy	0	0	0	0
COVID Government Funding Reserve	Established to hold funds advanced by Government to respond to the COVID 19 pandemic which require to be applied in future years	391	-391	0	0
Savings Management - Highways	Established specifically to provide one off funding for highways savings proposals in the Financial Strategy	0	0	0	0
Highways Development & Innovation Fund	Set aside funds for pump priming the Development and Innovation programme.	1,500	-900	0	600
New Homes Bonus	Established from unapplied New Homes Bonus Grant balances.	1,177	-342	0	834
Public Health Reserve	This reserve includes balances committed to specific public health projects.	4,323	-1,127	23	3,220
Repairs & Maintenance Reserve	Set aside for known repairs and maintenance required to Council owned properties.	333	-87	0	246
Resources Efficiency	Established for investment in new developments, particularly information technology, that service area would not be expected to meet from their internal service level agreements for support services.	1,217	-838	116	495
Revenue Commitments from Unringfenced Revenue Grants	Established from unapplied unringfenced Grant balances. Commitments have been made against these balances in 2023/24	4,328	-1,871	884	3,341
Severe Weather	Required to meet unbudgeted costs arising from the damage caused by severe weather. The policy of the Council is to budget for an average year's expenditure in the revenue accounts and transfer any underspend to the reserve or fund any overspend from the reserve.	3,009	-2,694	0	315

	Purpose of Balance	Balance Brought Forward (£'000)	Expenditure in 2023/24 (£'000)	Income in 2023/24 (£'000)	Balance Carried Forward (£'000)
TMO Vehicle Replacement	Set up to meet the costs of replacement vehicles by the Integrated Transport Unit.	67	-30	0	37
		21,583	-10,521	1,631	12,693
School Balances					
Balances held by schools under a scheme of delegation	Schools' balances have to be ringfenced for use by schools and schools have the right to spend those balances at their discretion.	10,487	-10,919	7,772	7,340
Schools Building Maintenance Insurance	The schools building maintenance insurance scheme is a service provided by Property Services for schools. In return for an annual sum all structural repairs and maintenance responsibilities previously identified as the "authority's responsibility" are carried out at no additional charge to the school.	2,126	-616	6	1,516
		12,612	-11,534	7,778	8,856

Total Reserves	52,579	-36,850	19,678	35,407
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Provisions					
Accumulated Absences Account	Provision to cover potential future payments of employee benefits not taken as at the end of the year. This is required under IFRS accounting regulations.	3,055	2,545	-3,055	2,545
Other Provisions - Short Term	Includes a number of small provisions including Environmental Maintenance contract commitments and Shopping Centre rental payments	708	5	-552	161
Other Provisions - Long Term	Includes a number of small provisions including S106 Accrued Interest, profit share agreements and Shopping Centre rental payments.	73	0	0	73
Tenancy Deposit Clawbacks	This represents deposits held for the economic development workshops that may be repaid at some point in the future.	234	36	-28	243
Liability Insurance	Provision to meet the estimated actuarial valuation of claims for public liability and employers' liability	4,096	847	-965	3,978
NDR Appeals	Represents the Council's share of the provision held for successful appeals against business rates.	4,074	2,342	-4,461	1,955
Council Tax Bad Debt	Held for potential write offs of Council tax debtor balances.	10,717	1,929	-294	12,352
NNDR Bad Debt	Held for potential write offs of NNDR debtor balances.	2,520	-43	0	2,477
General Fund Bad Debts	Held for potential write offs of debtor balances for General Fund Services including Housing Benefits.	7,414	524	-1,076	6,862
HRA Bad Debts	Held for potential write offs of debtor balances for Housing Revenue Account rents and other debtor balances.	394	0	-53	341
Total Provisions		33,284	8,231	-10,483	31,032

Total Reserves & Provisions	85,863	-28,619	9,195	66,439
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Delegated School Balances

8.2 The movement in delegated schools' balances are detailed in the table below.

Movement in delegated school balances 2023/24

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	Increase/ (Decrease) £'000
Schools:			
- Revenue Balances	6,486	6,083	(403)
- Invested Balances	470	459	(11)
- Extended Schools Activities Balance	834	797	(37)
Sub Total within Schools	7,791	7,340	(451)
DSG (Deficit)/Surplus	2,695	0	(2,695)
Total Delegated School Balances	10,486	7,340	(3,146)

8.3 Schools' balances have to be ringfenced for use by schools and schools have the right to spend those balances at their discretion. Of the 85 schools with balances, 8 have deficit balances.

8.4 The Extended Schools activities allocations for schools have decreased marginally during 2023/24. These balances are ringfenced to each individual school within School Balances.

8.5 In 2020, new reporting requirements were introduced to establish a new reserve for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) balances. For those local authorities with a DSG balance surplus, the requirement is that the surplus is held in a earmarked useable reserve, and so for 2022/23 the Council held a surplus of £2.695m which was held in School Balances within Earmarked Reserves. During 2023/24 the Council had an overspend against DSG and so now holds a DSG deficit of £2.304m. The reporting requirements require that any DSG deficit is instead held in an unusable reserve named the DSG Adjustment Account.

APPENDIX 9

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Detail	Agreed Capital Programme - Council 02/03/24	Slippage & Budget Changes Approved To Quarter 3 2023/24	Quarter 4 Budget Changes to be Approved	Revised 2023/24 Capital Programme Quarter 4
	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Fund				
Adult Services	-	-	-	-
Childrens Services	16.190	(5.634)	(1.175)	9.381
Place	77.054	(4.410)	1.264	73.908
Resources	1.000	(0.858)	0.379	0.521
Total General Fund	94.244	(10.902)	0.468	83.810
Housing Revenue Account	20.475	12.351	(16.624)	16.202
Total Approved Budget	114.719	1.448	(16.156)	100.012

APPENDIX 10

CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN POSITION BY DIRECTORATE 2023/24

Detail	Revised Capital Programme - Outturn 2023/24 £m	Actual Expenditure 31/03/2024 £m	Variance £m	Spend To Budget %
General Fund				
Health & Wellbeing	-	-	-	-
People	9.381	6.823	2.558	72.7%
Place	73.908	69.662	4.246	94.3%
Resources	0.521	0.794	(0.273)	152.4%
Total General Fund	83.810	77.279	6.531	92.2%
Housing Revenue Account	16.202	15.060	1.142	92.9%
Total Approved Budget	100.012	92.339	7.673	92.3%

APPENDIX 11

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT VARIANCES BETWEEN REVISED OUTTURN BUDGET AND OUTTURN EXPENDITURE BY DIRECTORATE AND SERVICE AREAS FOR 2023/24

11.1 The overall capital programme, both General Fund and HRA, outturned at £92.3m expenditure against a budget profile of £100m for the 2023/24 financial year, a £7.7m underspend against expected profile or 92% expenditure against budget.

11.2 **People** - Total underspend against People capital programme was £1.5m against profile.

- £0.4m underspend against Adult Social Care Operations to support Technology Equipment and Adaptation requirements for supported living, this funding will continue in the 2024/25 financial to support further initiatives.
- £1.0m against Learning and Skills for various school-controlled grants such as Devolved Formula Capital and Energy Efficiency Grants. These grants have a three year spend period and will be rolled into the 2024/25 financial year for continued expenditure.

11.3 **Place** – Total underspend against the Place capital programme was £5.3m, which was comprised of the following areas of main underspends and overspends against profiles:

- **Place – Homes and Communities** - £0.175k above budget profile as a result of expenditure incurred on the Whitchurch Leisure Centre project varying against budget profile for the year. The project overall remains within budget and the 2024/25 budget profile has been reduced to reflect.
- **Place – Infrastructure** – Overall financial outturn position for 2023/24 is £3.9m underspend against budget. Place Infrastructure contains a number of Highways related projects and the main areas of outturn variation are:
 - £0.7m underspend on the £1.54m OZEV residential charging points grant project. The project is in mid delivery with many installs completed with the remaining elements being finalised early 2024/25.
 - £1.4m underspend on the overall Integrated Transport Plan Grant. This is mainly due to timing delays on the delivery of a number of identified projects. The grant is fully committed against prioritised identified schemes, and these will continue to full delivery in the 2024/25 financial year.
 - £1.8m underspend on Highways Maintenance Block. The government announced additional funding of £2.6m towards the end of the scheduled Highways Maintenance works calendar and not all of this additional funding could be incorporated into a deliverable programme. This underspend will be utilised in the 2024/25 financial year alongside further Department for Transport Highways Maintenance Grant.

- **Place - Housing Services** - £1.0m underspend against profile. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) finalised at £1.0m overspend against profiled budget. Previous delays in delivery resulting from Covid are now rapidly being progressed with unspent grant funding previously profiled over a three-year period. This overspend against profile will be financed from previous years unspent grant. The second element of Housing relates to an underspend of £2.0m on a number of Energy Efficiency Grant projects against profiles. A number of these have now been extended into the 2024/25 financial year.
- 11.4 **Housing Revenue Account** - Total underspend against the HRA programme was £1m, of which £0.5m was on the Major Repairs Programme against an overall budget allocation of £7.418m so significant expenditure has been invested with just a slight underspend. £0.5m was on the New Build Programme which was mainly due to profiling of contractor payments and costs which will continue into 2024-25, with the overall programme still on schedule.

APPENDIX 12

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FINANCING 2023/24

Detail	Agreed Capital Programme - Council 02/03/24	Slippage & Budget Changes Approved To Quarter 3 2023/24	Quarter 4 Budget Changes to be Approved	Revised 2023/24 Capital Programme Quarter 4
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Financing				
Self Financed Prudential Borrowing *	39.169	(14.743)	(7.785)	16.640
SALIX Loan	1.910	(1.000)	-	0.910
Government Grants	48.690	5.5959	(4.420)	49.866
Other Grants	0.118	2.157	(0.624)	1.650
Other Contributions	7.175	1.916	(1.6147)	7.476
Revenue Contributions to Capital	0.749	3.440	(0.743)	3.446
Major Repairs Allowance	4.828	3.488	(1.218)	7.098
Corporate Resources (expectation - Capital Receipts only)	12.080	0.596	0.250	12.925
Total Confirmed Funding	114.719	1.448	(16.156)	100.012

* Borrowing for which on-going revenue costs are financed by the Service, usually from revenue savings generated from the schemes.

APPENDIX 13

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 TO 2026/27

Detail	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
General Fund			
Health & Wellbeing	-	-	-
People	9.025	9.280	3.950
Place & Enterprise	79.397	95.617	35.923
Resources	0.100	-	-
Total General Fund	88.523	104.897	39.873
Housing Revenue Account	29.253	14.232	9.000
Total Approved Budget	117.776	119.129	48.873
Financing			
Self Financed Prudential Borrowing *	40.024	19.352	9.336
SALIX Loan	-	-	-
Government Grants	57.267	79.420	29.591
Other Grants	0.192	0.044	-
Other Contributions	5.461	6.173	0.500
Revenue Contributions to Capital	0.231	0.747	0.347
Major Repairs Allowance	4.828	5.000	5.000
Corporate Resources (expectation - Capital Receipts only)	9.772	8.393	4.100
Total Confirmed Funding	117.776	119.129	48.873

APPENDIX 14

PROJECTED CAPITAL RECEIPTS POSITION

- 14.1 The current capital programme is heavily reliant on the Council generating capital receipts to finance the capital programme. There is a high level of risk in these projections as they are subject to changes in property and land values, the actions of potential buyers and being granted planning permission on sites. Appendix 14 summarises the current allocated and projected capital receipt position across 2023-24 to 2026-27. A RAG analysis has been applied for capital receipts projected, based on the current likelihood of generating them by the end of each financial year. Those marked as green are highly likely to be completed by the end of the financial year, amber achievable but challenging and thus there is a risk of slippage, and red are highly unlikely to complete in year and thus there is a high risk of slippage. However, no receipts are guaranteed to complete in this financial year as there may be delays between exchanging contracts and completing.
- 14.2 During the 2023-24 financial year, there has been an unprecedented requirement for capital receipts to fund expenditure in addition to that required by schemes detailed in the approved capital programme. This additional requirement has primarily arisen due to the Council's ambitious transformation programme. As reported throughout the year, the intention has been to utilise the statutory flexible use of capital receipts to finance this transformation programme and so deliver revenue budget savings. Expenditure incurred in the year in relation to the transformation programme totalled £10.062m. Capital receipts were also required for the approved capital programme (£11.501m), to finance ongoing redundancy costs under the flexibilities around the use of capital receipts for transformation revenue purposes (£2.444m) and for third party loans (£0.684m). The requirement for capital receipts in 2023-24 was £24.692m. By following Council policy of applying un-ringfenced capital grants in place of capital receipts where they are not required in full due to scheme underspends, this requirement was reduced by £3.133m to £21.559m.
- 14.3 Capital receipts of £11.042m were realised in year, resulting in an unmet requirement of £10.517m. To further mitigate this requirement, capital receipts required to fund the approved capital programme were replaced by borrowing of £8.227m, resulting in a final unmet requirement position of £2.290m in year. This requirement has been resolved by a draw down from the capital receipts set aside.
- 14.4 Replacement of capital receipts funding with borrowing results in an additional Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) liability of £0.584m and so impact on the revenue budget.
- 14.5 The table below summarises the capital receipts requirement and availability in 2023-24.

	General Fund £m	HRA £m	Total £m
2023-24 Capital Receipts Requirement			
Approved Capital Programme	11.330	0.171	11.501
Ongoing Redundancies	2.444		2.444
Third Party Loans	0.684		0.684
Council Transformation Programme			
- Transformation Projects	6.702		6.702
- Strategic Transformation Partner	3.360		3.360
	24.520	0.171	24.692
2023-24 Capital Receipts Available			
Capital Receipts Replaced With Grant	(3.133)		(3.133)
Capital Receipts Replaced By Borrowing	(8.197)	(0.030)	(8.227)
Capital Receipts Realised	(9.212)	(1.830)	(11.042)
	(20.541)	(1.860)	(22.402)
2023-24 Capital Receipts Surplus / (Deficit)	(3.979)	1.689	(2.290)

14.6 Capital receipts of £17.465m were brought forward from 2022-23 and following the utilisation of £2.290m to fund the capital receipts requirement in 2023-24, the Council has £15.175m in capital receipts in hand at 31/03/24. These will be set-aside, enabling the Council to achieve an additional MRP saving of £0.420m in 2024/25. These capital receipts are required to finance schemes they are allocated to in the future years' capital programme.

14.7 Based on the current approved position, across the life of the programme there are significant shortfalls in capital receipt projections of £29.050m, £60.303m and £64.338m in 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27 respectively based on receipts rated green in the RAG analysis to fund the required budget in the capital programme, further transformation programme commitments and the current Voluntary Redundancy (VR) Programme initiated to achieve significant revenue budget savings. There is, therefore, the requirement to progress the disposals rated amber and red, which over the period 2024-25 to 2027-28 total £57.896m, to ensure they are realised, together with realising the revenue running cost savings from some of the properties. Considerable work is required to realise these receipts, with generally a lead in time of at least 12 to 18 months on larger disposals. In addition to the current expenditure commitments, the programme will also grow as new schemes are approved. Officers are currently exploring the potential to accelerate the realisation of capital receipts and to identify additional opportunities to achieve further capital receipts.

14.8 It is important that work progresses, to avoid funding shortfalls in 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27 and minimise any shortfall in future years. Failure to generate the required level of capital receipts will result in the need to further reduce or re-profile the capital programme, some of which will occur naturally as part of the review of the delivery of schemes; or undertake prudential borrowing, which will incur future year's revenue costs that are not budgeted in the revenue financial strategy.

14.9 The projected shortfall in capital receipts is purely based on the currently approved capital programme for the period 2024-25 to 2026-27. The current Capital Strategy 2023-24 to 2028-29, approved by Council in February 2024, identifies potential future

priority capital schemes with estimated costs of £239.223m. It is prudent for schemes which are not anticipated to generate additional income to be funded from capital receipts. This will further increase the future pressure on capital receipts generation.

Detail	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
Corporate Resources Allocated in Capital Programme	- 1.465	14.182	8.393	4.100
Capital Receipts used to finance redundancy costs	2.444	-	-	-
Capital Receipts used to finance Transformation costs	10.062	12.097	-	-
Capital Receipts used to finance VR costs	-	11.000	-	-
To be allocated from Ring Fenced Receipts	-	8.983	22.925	-
Total Commitments	11.042	46.263	31.319	4.100
Capital Receipts in hand/projected:				
Brought Forward in hand	17.465	15.175	(29.050)	(60.303)
Generated 2020/21 YTD	11.042	-	-	-
Projected - 'Green'	-	2.038	0.065	0.065
Total in hand/projected	28.507	17.213	(28.985)	(60.238)
Shortfall to be financed from Prudential Borrowing / (Surplus) to carry forward	(17.465)	29.050	60.303	64.338
Further Assets Being Considered for Disposal	-	30.824	9.463	7.001

Shropshire Council - Capital Programme 2023/24 - 2026/27

Appendix 15

Capital Programme Summary Outturn 2023/24

Directorate	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £	Budget Virements Quarter 4 £	Revised Budget Quarter 4 £	Actual Spend £	Spend to Budget Variance £	% Budget Spend	Outturn Projection £	2024/25 Revised Budget £	2025/26 Revised Budget £	2026/27 Revised Budget £
General Fund										
Health & Wellbeing	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
People	10,555,524	(1,174,860)	9,380,664	6,823,052	2,557,612	72.74%	9,380,664	9,025,290	9,280,231	3,950,000
Place	72,643,595	1,264,253	73,907,848	69,661,959	4,245,889	94.26%	73,907,848	79,397,344	100,617,104	40,923,256
Resources	142,361	378,712	521,073	793,965	(272,892)	152.37%	521,073	100,000	0	0
Total General Fund	83,341,480	468,105	83,809,585	77,278,975	6,530,610	92.21%	83,809,585	88,522,634	109,897,335	44,873,256
Housing Revenue Account	32,826,053	(16,624,117)	16,201,936	15,059,646	1,142,290	92.95%	16,201,936	29,252,974	9,231,781	4,000,000
Total Approved Budget	116,167,533	(16,156,012)	100,011,521	92,338,621	7,672,900	92.33%	100,011,521	117,775,608	119,129,116	48,873,256

Shropshire Council - Capital Programme Portfolio Holder Summary Outturn 2023/24

Portfolio Holder	Revised Budget Quarter 3 2023/24 £	Budget Virements Quarter 4 £	Revised Budget Quarter 4 £	Actual Spend £	Spend to Budget Variance £	% Budget Spend	Outturn Projection £	2024/25 Revised Budget £	2025/26 Revised Budget £	2026/27 Revised Budget £
General Fund										
Adult Social Care, Public Health & Communities	4,551,343	317,752	4,869,095	5,409,839	-540,744	111.11%	4,869,095	300,000	0	0
Growth & Regeneration	6,312,761	884,076	7,196,837	8,519,579	-1,322,742	118.38%	7,196,837	12,403,520	6,643,408	0
Climate Change, Environment & Transport	438,156	0	438,156	697,632	-259,476	159.22%	438,156	0	0	0
Children & Education	8,998,879	-1,174,860	7,824,019	6,745,657	1,078,362	86.22%	7,824,019	8,725,290	9,280,231	3,950,000
Finance & Corporate Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Housing & Assets	50,431,601	-18,441,399	31,990,202	26,941,511	5,048,691	84.22%	31,990,202	20,352,884	24,379,873	11,100,000
Culture & Digital	5,061,570	75,005	5,136,575	5,677,913	-541,338	110.54%	5,136,575	8,813,964	3,670,943	2,133,261
Highways & Infrastructure	7,547,170	18,807,531	26,354,701	23,286,845	3,067,856	88.36%	26,354,701	37,926,976	65,922,880	23,689,995
Policy & Strategy, Improvement & Communications	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Total General Fund	83,341,480	468,105	83,809,585	77,278,975	6,530,610	92.21%	83,809,585	88,522,634	109,897,335	40,873,256
Housing Revenue Account										
Housing & Assets (HRA)	32,826,053	-16,624,117	16,201,936	15,059,646	1,142,290	92.95%	16,201,936	29,252,974	9,231,781	4,000,000
Total Approved Budget	116,167,533	-16,156,012	100,011,521	92,338,621	7,672,900	92.33%	100,011,521	117,775,608	119,129,116	44,873,256

Shropshire Council - Capital Programme Budget Outturn Report 2023/24

Appendix 15

Directorate Service Area	Revised Budget 2023/24 £	Budget Virements Quarter 4 £	Revised Budget Quarter 4 £	Actual Spend £	Spend to Budget Variance £	% Budget Spend	Outturn Projection £	2024/25 Revised Budget £	2025/26 Revised Budget £	2026/27 Revised Budget £
General Fund										
Health & Wellbeing	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Public Health Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Regulatory Services Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
People	10,555,524	(1,174,860)	9,380,664	6,823,052	2,557,612	72.74%	9,380,664	9,025,290	9,280,231	3,950,000
Adult Social Care Contracts & Provider Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Adult Social Care Operations Capital	1,556,645	0	1,556,645	77,395	1,479,250	4.97%	1,556,645	300,000	0	0
Children's Residential Care Capital	385,075	0	385,075	385,649	(574)	100.15%	385,075	300,000	0	0
Non Maintained Schools Capital	1,495,672	45	1,495,717	1,496,808	(1,091)	100.07%	1,495,717	782,689	2,000,000	0
Primary School Capital	7,028,906	(1,020,934)	6,007,972	4,561,295	1,446,677	75.92%	6,007,972	2,075,996	0	0
Secondary School Capital	657,111	(29,667)	627,444	247,138	380,306	39.39%	627,444	27,250	0	0
Special Schools Capital	55,951	0	55,951	54,768	1,183	97.89%	55,951	0	0	0
Unallocated School Capital	-623,836	(124,304)	-748,140	0	(748,140)	0.00%	(748,140)	5,539,355	7,280,231	3,950,000
Place Capital - Commercial Services	8,821,308	(526,583)	8,294,725	6,322,202	1,972,523	76.22%	8,294,725	15,844,144	19,001,000	6,100,000
Corporate Landlord Capital	8,821,308	(526,583)	8,294,725	6,322,202	1,972,523	76.22%	8,294,725	15,844,144	19,001,000	6,100,000
Place Capital - Economic Growth	8,415,335	330,545	8,745,880	10,161,983	(1,416,103)	116.19%	8,745,880	13,672,892	8,602,226	1,500,000
Broadband Capital	1,611,088	(162,045)	1,449,043	1,542,404	(93,361)	106.44%	1,449,043	909,632	1,579,945	1,500,000
Development Management Capital	529,324	(176,046)	353,278	427,746	(74,468)	121.08%	353,278	157,500	40,500	0
Economic Growth Capital	5,650,343	824,214	6,474,557	7,670,473	(1,195,916)	118.47%	6,474,557	12,246,020	6,602,908	0
Planning Policy Capital	624,580	(155,578)	469,002	521,359	(52,357)	111.16%	469,002	359,740	378,873	0
Place Capital - Homes & Communities	3,308,121	(141,662)	3,166,459	3,341,544	(175,085)	105.53%	3,166,459	7,804,332	2,090,998	633,261
Leisure Capital	2,773,508	26,749	2,800,257	3,070,332	(270,075)	109.64%	2,800,257	7,269,718	2,067,303	633,261
Libraries Capital	118,475	0	118,475	77,970	40,505	65.81%	118,475	94,780	23,695	0
Outdoor Partnerships Capital	439,038	(168,411)	270,627	185,609	85,018	68.58%	270,627	439,834	0	0
Visitor Economy Capital	-22,900	0	-22,900	7,633	(30,533)	-33.33%	(22,900)	0	0	0
Place Capital - Infrastructure	40,811,379	2,183,414	42,994,793	39,084,702	3,960,091	90.79%	42,994,793	37,926,976	65,373,880	25,837,000
Environment & Transport Capital	438,156	0	438,156	438,157	(1)	100.00%	438,156	0	0	0
Highways Capital	40,373,223	2,183,414	42,556,637	38,596,546	3,960,091	90.69%	42,556,637	37,926,976	65,373,880	25,837,000
Waste Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Place Capital - Housing Services	11,287,452	(581,461)	10,705,991	10,801,527	-95,536	100.89%	10,705,991	4,149,000	5,549,000	6,852,995
Housing Services	11,287,452	(581,461)	10,705,991	10,801,527	-95,536	100.89%	10,705,991	4,149,000	5,549,000	6,852,995
Resources	142,361	378,712	521,073	793,965	(272,892)	152.37%	521,073	100,000	0	0
ICT Digital Transformation - CRM Capital	576	316,143	316,719	427,112	(110,393)	134.86%	316,719	0	0	0
ICT Digital Transformation - ERP Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
ICT Digital Transformation - Infrastructure & Archit	0	182,084	182,084	282,082	(99,998)	154.92%	182,084	100,000	0	0
ICT Digital Transformation - Social Care Capital	0	22,270	22,270	84,770	(62,500)	380.65%	22,270	0	0	0
ICT Digital Transformation - Unallocated Capital	141,785	(141,785)	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Total General Fund	83,341,480	468,105	83,809,585	77,278,975	6,530,610	92.21%	83,809,585	88,522,634	109,897,335	44,873,256
Housing Revenue Account	32,826,053	(16,624,117)	16,201,936	15,059,646	1,142,290	92.95%	16,201,936	29,252,974	9,231,781	4,000,000
HRA Dwellings Capital	32,826,053	(16,624,117)	16,201,936	15,059,646	1,142,290	92.95%	16,201,936	29,252,974	9,231,781	4,000,000
Total Approved Budget	116,167,533	(16,156,012)	100,011,521	92,338,621	7,672,900	92.33%	100,011,521	117,775,608	119,129,116	48,873,256

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Committee and Date
Transformation &
Improvement Scrutiny
3rd June 2024

Cabinet
5th June 2024

Item

Public



Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 4 2023/24

Responsible Officer:	James Walton		
email:	james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 258915
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Robert Macey, Culture & Digital		

1. Synopsis

The Shropshire Plan clarifies our vision and priorities, aligning our resources to deliver positive outcomes for our people, businesses and communities. Delivery of our outcomes is measured through the developing Performance Management Framework, demonstrating progress to date.

2. Executive Summary

Overview

The Shropshire Plan (TSP) was created to clarify Shropshire Council's vision, priorities and Strategic Objectives. These objectives reflect the outcomes we aim to achieve within our available financial envelope. We measure the achievement of TSP by monitoring our performance (using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to help measure, drive and understand delivery of our Strategic Objectives) and managing our overall financial position (ultimately delivering our outcomes while remaining within our agreed financial envelope).

This the final report for 2023/24 where the focus was to scrutinise our financial management with the aim to create a sustainable financial future. Over the year the need was to closely monitor and review our finances to support delivery of the Medium

Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). We are seeking to rebase our budgets over several years, in line with the outcomes defined in TSP, to secure a modern, efficient, and sustainable base for the Council finances across the 5-year period of the MTFS. This approach is aligned to the recommendations of the LGA peer review and is comparable with the best approaches seen in local government. We will need to make the adjustments each year to ensure financial survival moving towards financial stability and sustainability. Against this backdrop we are seeking to optimise our performance within our available financial envelope. Our plans will focus on economy, efficiency and effectiveness, redefining the way we deliver interventions to optimise delivery of our vision wherever and however possible.

Summary

- 2.1. The focus of the Council in 2023/24 and the immediate future is necessarily directed at the delivery of a balanced budget, and is currently, therefore, the highest priority Strategic Objective within TSP balanced alongside protecting our most vulnerable children. Our new Performance Management Framework has been reviewed and strengthened to align with all our strategic objectives to enable us to become an evidence led performance managed council.
- 2.2. Development of our KPIs will continue with Portfolio Holders, Executive Directors and Assistant Directors identified for each indicator. Targets, tolerances and benchmarks will be clarified over the coming months, where possible, with regularly updated monitoring information published via the performance webpage at - [Performance | Shropshire Council](#) Online performance reporting will be the main source of performance information enabling greater insight and scrutiny of the Council's performance and delivery of its outcomes as set out in TSP.
- 2.3. Through engagement across all Directorates the PMF has been launched with the focus on using data to inform decisions and actions particularly where performance may not be meeting targets and expectations. As part of the necessary arrangements for delivering TSP, the Council has reviewed and updated its approaches to both performance and financial monitoring. Both areas are now more pro-actively informed by timely activity data and are available to a range of officers to help guide decision making. Interactive dashboards using 'PowerBI' are being developed which will show a summary of KPIs for each Healthy priority through to agreed strategic objectives. It will then be possible to drill down into more detailed information for each KPI including status which is RAG (red, amber, green) rated, trend information and benchmarking where available against England and nearest statistical neighbours.
- 2.4. The Q4 Finance report (elsewhere on this agenda) sets out the financial envelope of the Council and how spending plans and patterns are being managed to deliver a balanced budget.
- 2.5. This Q4 Performance report complements the Finance report but provides a different perspective. We may therefore find that the position on KPIs is favourable, but that the finance position is adverse because the activity levels (the cost drivers) are higher than anticipated.
- 2.6. As part of our new approach feedback on the design and usability of the new report and performance webpage is welcomed. A feedback form will be available

for questions and queries, and this will be reviewed with responses provided and published where appropriate alongside the dashboard.

Key Indicators and Context

- 2.7. The Q4 performance report is written as an exception report with all key performance indicators being provided in the dashboard which should be viewed in conjunction with this report.
- 2.8. The Q4 report is not fully complete with all the agreed performance indicators due to the time taken to implement the new approach, obtain data and the focus on getting it right. Those outstanding are noted in the report. It should also be noted that some of the performance indicators are baseline figures from which targets will be established and then performance monitored against this.
- 2.9. It should be noted that the approach being taken by Shropshire Council is progressive and in advance of many other authorities and places us in a strong position to continually improve our approach to managing performance, identifying areas of under and over performance, and ultimately providing evidence of our ability to deliver the outcomes set out in TSP.

3. Recommendations

Transformation & Improvement Scrutiny Committee

- 3.1. It is recommended that Members of the Transformation & Improvement Scrutiny Committee:
 - 3.1.1. Review and consider performance dashboard information alongside this exception report.
 - 3.1.2. Note progress to date in achieving the outcomes of The Shropshire Plan (TSP) and identify any areas for future consideration by the committee.
 - 3.1.3. Consider that the KPIs currently agreed remain the same for 2024/2025.
 - 3.1.4. The Portfolio Holders consider reviewing the targets for the agreed KPIs with the relevant Executive Director 2024/25.
 - 3.1.5. Consider a new set of KPIs and key deliverables aligned with the review of The Shropshire Plan.

Cabinet

- 3.2. It is recommended that Cabinet :
 - 3.2.1. Review and consider performance dashboard information alongside this exception report.
 - 3.2.2. Note progress to date in achieving the outcomes of The Shropshire Plan (TSP) and comment as appropriate.
 - 3.2.3. Consider that the KPIs currently agreed remain the same for 2024/2025.
 - 3.2.4. The Portfolio Holders consider reviewing the targets for the agreed KPIs with the relevant Executive Director.
 - 3.2.5. Consider a new set of KPIs and deliverables aligned with the review of The Shropshire Plan.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The management of the Council's Performance Management Framework is a key process in ensuring strategic risks are mitigated and the Council can carry out business as intended and planned for within TSP.
- 4.2. The management of key performance indicators is a key process to monitoring progress in the delivery of outcomes as set out in TSP. This provides insight into whether corrective action is required to bring performance back on track.
- 4.3. The performance reports and dashboards provide a high-level lens into the performance of Shropshire Council allowing for further targeted detail analysis to support the mitigation of any risks identified.
- 4.4. Regular financial reporting is part of the governance and risk management approach within the Council ensuring that it delivers sustainable and value for money services as required under statute. Risk management continues to be an active part of this process, and Officers review potential risk and opportunity scenarios each month. The Council holds two finance related strategic risks regarding managing the current financial situation and so this remains under constant review to consider appropriate management action of the situation.
- 4.5. The dashboards include instructions for use and a feedback form is available for completion should there be questions or feedback. Members will be shown how to use the dashboards.
- 4.6. Monitoring will be in place using the dashboards so any issues can be resolved in a timely manner.
- 4.7. Ultimately, the Council must risk assess the delivery of Strategic Objectives within TSP and adjust, accordingly, to ensure an acceptable balance of outcomes are achieved at a strategic level. This may mean the prioritisation of some objectives over others to react to the evidence presented within the PMF. It may not be possible to achieve optimal performance across all indicators and it may be necessary to oversee expected reductions in performance in some areas to remain within the overall financial envelope.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The performance report provides progress on key activity targets which will have correlation to financial performance.
- 5.2. It should be noted that positive improvement on activity may not necessarily correspond to financial improvement, and this should be drawn out in the narrative of the financial and performance reports.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The performance report includes KPIs for Healthy Environment with measures for monitoring Shropshire Council's direction of progress on climate change.
- 6.2. However, Climate Change also has significant implications for Healthy People, a Healthy Economy and a Healthy Organisation and further work to develop additional KPIs, in partnership with the Climate Team should reflect this. Further indicators will be made available as new data becomes available. This will support a positive outcome.

7. Background

- 7.1. Quarter 4 – a total of 87 Key Performance Indicators have been added to the Shropshire Plan report. Additional information will be added in the period between writing of this report and its presentation to members.
- 7.2. Information on each of these indicators can be found via the performance webpage at – [The Shropshire Plan Performance Dashboard](#)
- 7.3. The online performance report is now the main source of performance information. This report highlights any exceptions or downturns and explains the causal issues and any corrective actions the service is taking.
- 7.4. In Q4 there are 11 exceptions that have been raised and these are reported in the additional information section below.

8. Additional Information

During quarter 4 a total of 7 performance indicators showed an improvement of which the following are the most notable

- HP5 uptake of breast cancer screening,
- HP22 remaining in touch with a high proportion of care leavers,
- HEn6 improved rates of recycling, re-use and composting on last year,
- HEn9a increasing the generation of renewable energy solar,
- HEc18 reduction in number of households in B&B accommodation,
- HEc22 major planning applications processed,
- HO11 staff turnover rates.

There are 11 exceptions to report this quarter.

8.1. **HP18 Assessment timeliness: within 45 working days.**

A focus on completing out of date assessments has resulted in a dip in performance. The front door assessment performance remains strong, assessments that are open on children already being worked with do go out of

time more easily as they are live and evolving pieces of work, often linked to Children Looked After reviews or review Child Protection Conferences.

8.2. HP19 Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement.

The stability of placements has fallen slightly, this is due to several sibling groups having to move placements.

8.3. HP31 Percentage of Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued within 20 weeks.

Performance for the year is lower than target. During the year, the service area has seen a substantial increase in the number of EHCP requests, the first three months of 2024 have seen 205 EHCPs issued compared to 157 in 2023, this is an increase of 31%. A recovery plan has been developed and a new target profile will be provided.

8.4. HEc11 Paid employment for people with learning disabilities.

Supporting people with learning disabilities to achieve paid employment can increase self-confidence and independence whilst reducing reliance on others. The service is working with its clients to find opportunities to develop skills and positive experiences through training, volunteering and where suitable to find paid employment.

Performance for those in paid employment at quarter 4 is 6.43%, this has slightly missed the target of 7.2% but this is still an improvement from quarter 3 of 6.34%. This was a stretch target set locally and it is important to note that Shropshire is still above the West Midlands at 3.2% and England at 4.8%.

Whilst performance for paid employment is one element of the service, the Enable team continue to work with a range of clients offering support at various stages. They are currently working with 10 clients to support them with their work preparation to become ready for searching for paid employment and 11 clients to support them to retain their employment. They are currently working with 35 supported interns in 23/24 to find them work placements alongside their college work programme. The supported internship work contributes to the prevention of those clients needing adult social care intervention.

8.5. HEc21 Reduce the % of workforce with no or low level qualifications.

The percentage of the Shropshire workforce with low or no qualifications has decreased from 15.5% to 10.6%. Despite the improvement, rates are now higher than the England rate (8.8%) on which the target is based. Rates are similar to the West Midlands (10.5%).

Please note that the data is from the Annual Population Survey and that the sample size for Shropshire is relatively small compared with the West Midlands and England. Although still statistically robust, the confidence intervals are larger

which can mean that data at a local level is subject to a greater degree of annual fluctuation than regional or national data.

8.6. HEn11 The percentage of streetlights converted to LED

The conversion of streetlights to LED was proposed to be substantially complete by the end of December 2023.

At quarter 3, 84% of all Shropshire streetlights were LED, just short of the 88% target. During quarter 4 work to convert the streetlights has continued but the target of 98% has been missed with currently only 88% of streetlights converted. Updated feedback from the service is that it is not possible to complete 100% of the streetlights for example lanterns cannot be converted. Information and numbers around this are awaited from the service but at time of writing have not been provided.

The project delivering LED lighting is due for completion by the end of June 2024.

8.7. HEn15 Number of environmental permit inspections completed.

The aim of the environmental permit inspections is to reduce pollution from industrial and commercial operations to protect the environment. Carry out statutory Inspections of permitted industrial and commercial sites that emit pollutants in accordance with a risk-based inspection programme as set out in the statutory guidance.

Inspection numbers for Environmental Permitted Installations have fallen short of the statutory target this year due to sickness and conflicting statutory pressures. Steps are being taken to train up others in the team to provide more resilience as part of restructuring related to MTFS savings and so improved performance is expected for 2024/25.

8.8. HO1 Number of compliments received.

The number of compliments received by the Council has declined from 142 at quarter 3 to 107 at quarter 4 whilst this has missed the target, the performance is in line with other quarters. The number of compliments received can be an indication of quality of service delivery. The number of complaints received at quarter 4 has also fallen and whilst this is good news, the lower number suggest that overall, less people got in touch during quarter 4.

8.9. HO6 Budget Outturn vs Budget

The Council revenue position has been finalised for 2023/24. The Council has:

- Substantially contained revenue expenditure within the available budget (a variance of £7.302m against net spending representing 1.21% on the gross budget or 2.85% of net budget)
- Delivered £41.818m savings (81% of the target, and by both value and percentage the highest ever achieved by the Council)

- Improved the overall financial variance when compared to that projected at Quarter 3 by £6.656m (£14.533m compared to £7.877m)
- Delivered a smaller overall overspend than delivered in the previous financial year (£7.877m compared to £8.499m)
- Ensured the General Fund Balance has increased compared to the previous year (£8.237m compared to £7.093m, with plans to improve this position again in 2024/25)
- Reprofiled the capital programme over the year, aligning with revised delivery expectations, to £100.012m. Outturn capital expenditure for 2023/24 is £92.339m, representing 92.3% of the re-profiled budget. All £7.673m of the underspend has been carried forward to the 2024/25 programme.

8.10. HO13 Number of days lost due to sickness absence.

Overall lost days has increased by 8% this quarter however the increase in coughs, colds and influenza was by almost 18% and an increase of 26% for gastrointestinal illnesses which suggest that return to school/work following the Christmas break has led to the spread of winter viruses which is the main contributor to the increase in sickness absence for this quarter.

8.11. HO17 Responding to Freedom of information requests within statutory timescales (20 working days).

FOI response rates are monitored by Executive Directors through the PowerBi dashboard. There has been some slippage in response rates since the enforcement notice was lifted in November 2023. However, 76% is a sustained increase since the enforcement notice was issued in April 2023.

8.12. Exceptions previously reported

The following 5 measure are showing as red on the dashboard but as no new data is available, they have already been highlighted by this report in a previous quarter.

HP11 The percentage of adults who are overweight or obese. This measure is annual and was last updated in 21/22. The data is collected and reported by...

HP15 Excess under 75 mortality rate in adults with severe mental illness. This measure was last updated in 2018/19. The data is collected and reported by....

HEc2 Reduce the workplace pay gap with the national average by 50% by 2027

HEc20 Attainment 8 inline or better than national average

HO5 Resident satisfaction with Highways and Transport services

8.13. KPIs not available during the 2023/24 reporting period.

The following measures have not been included with the 2023/24 report but may be included during the 2024/25 Performance Reporting year.

HEn2 Public rights of way - this measure is currently being reviewed and a definition to be agreed so this can be included in the 2024/25 reporting period.

HEn5c % of street scene inspections meeting the required standards of cleanliness (weeds) - this has now been merged with HEn5a as weeds falls under litter and detritus.

HEn9b, c & d Increasing the generation of renewable energy by Shropshire Council b. wind c. hydro d. bioenergy. These will be reported when the Council has developed energy generation schemes from these sources.

HO10 Reducing bad debt by 10% per year – a debt KPI will be included in the 2024/25 reporting period and data is available.

HO16 % of staff who rate Shropshire Council as a good employer – due to a number of staff surveys already undertaken in 2023/24 it was decided to postpone the pulse survey to September 2024.

HO20 Member attendance at full council – this measure will be included in the 2024/25 reporting period with a suggested target of 96% attendance.

HP34 The number of people in long term care with digital included in their plan. The definition of the measure has been agreed and will be included in the 2024/25 reporting period.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The development of the new reporting sees a substantive step change in the reporting of performance with more emphasis on target delivery and comparator information.
- 9.2. The key performance pressure remains the delivery of a balanced budget which are detailed in the financial report.

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

Local Member: N/A

Appendices

None

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Committee and Date

Cabinet
5th June 2024

Item

Public



Treasury Management Update Quarter 4 2023/24

Responsible Officer:	James Walton		
email:	james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 258915
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Gwilym Butler, Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities		

1. Synopsis

The Council currently holds £36m in investments and £311m of borrowing, including £30m of new borrowing undertaken during the quarter, which is aligned with the Council approved Treasury Management Strategy and prudential indicators.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The report outlines the treasury management activities of the Council in the fourth quarter of 2023/24. It highlights the economic environment in which treasury management decisions have been made. It also provides an update on the performance of the treasury management function.
- 2.2. During Quarter 4 the internal finance team achieved a return of 5.50% on the Council's cash balances, outperforming the benchmark by 0.31%. This amounts to additional income of £43,430 during the quarter which is included within the Council's outturn position in the financial outturn report.
- 2.3. Despite medium and long term borrowing being an approved part of the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council, the high levels of cash balances held by the Council since the Covid-19 Pandemic of 2020 has prevented the necessity of any borrowing activity for several years. As cash balances have reduced, as expected and following reductions in grant funding and changes in spend activity, opportunities taken to defer external borrowing and utilise cash balances to borrow

internally (saving money in the short term on external interest costs) will now be reviewed over the coming twelve months. Initially, borrowing of £30million was agreed for a 12 month period during the last quarter and it is anticipated that a full review of the Council's borrowing levels will be performed in 2024/25.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. Members are asked to note that the Council remains fully compliant with the agreed prudential indicators and the treasury management strategy.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The assessment and management of risk are key considerations for any Treasury Management approach. Compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council's Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance together with the rigorous internal controls will enable the Council to manage the risk associated with Treasury Management activities and the potential for financial loss.
- 4.2. The Council's Audit Committee is the committee responsible for ensuring effective consideration of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and policies.
- 4.3. The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 4.4. There are no direct environmental, equalities or climate change consequences arising from this report.

4.5. Risk table

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
Security of funds	<p>The Council maintains an Annual Investment Strategy which ensures that minimum acceptable credit criteria is applied for all investments to ensure that only highly creditworthy counterparties are used which enables diversification across all investments.</p> <p>The Council uses a treasury advisor, Link Asset Services to provide a creditworthiness service of all potential investment counterparties, which is continuously monitored and updated as needed.</p>
Managing liquidity	<p>The Council undertakes cash flow monitoring which highlights anticipated cash transactions for the upcoming 18 months. All departments are requested to provide details of large value income and expenditure transactions that may impact on the authority's cash flow position. This is tracked on a daily basis and continuously updated to ensure that cash is held appropriately liquid should there be a need to use the funds.</p>

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
Achievement of investment benchmark	<p>Investments undertaken by the Finance team are benchmarked against the 3 Month Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA). The key factors in tracking performance of investments, is the cash balance available to invest and the return that is achieved on investments made. When interest rates are rising in the economy, it may be that previous investments that were fixed have now become less favourable, and so there is a higher risk that the benchmark may not be achieved.</p> <p>The availability of cash for investing has also become a key factor, especially in a period where reserves and hence cash balances have reduced. Also during the months of February and March the Council does not collect Council Tax and so cash balances reduce during these months in particular. In order to manage this period, cash is held in call accounts or highly liquid investments rather than being placed into longer term fixed interest investments. The main priority for the Council is always to maintain liquidity and the security of funds over chasing investment returns.</p>

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The Council makes assumptions about the levels of borrowing and investment income over the financial year. Reduced borrowing as a result of capital receipt generation or delays in delivery of the capital programme will both have a positive impact of the council's cash position. Similarly, higher than benchmarked returns on available cash will also help the Council's financial position. For monitoring purposes, assumptions are made early in year about borrowing and returns based on the strategies agreed by Council in the preceding February. Performance outside of these assumptions results in increased or reduced income for the Council.
- 5.2. The Quarter 4 performance is above benchmark and has delivered additional income of £43,400.
- 5.3. As at 31 March 2024 the Council held £36million in investments as detailed in Appendix A and borrowing of £311million at fixed interest rates. The level of investments has fallen by £48.4m in the last 12 months, as reserves have been applied to ongoing operations. The level of external borrowing has increased in the last twelve months with an additional £30million loan taken out prior to the end of the financial year.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The Council's Financial Strategy includes proposals to deliver a reduced carbon footprint for the Council therefore the Finance Team is working with the Council to achieve this. There are no direct climate change impacts arising from this report. Shropshire Council's investment portfolio has no level 1, 2 or 3 emissions. It comprises of straightforward cash deposits with financial institutions and other Local Authorities.

7. Background

- 7.1. The Council defines its treasury management activities as “the management of the authority’s borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”. The report informs Members of the treasury activities of the Council between 1 January 2024 and 31 March 2024.
- 7.2. For wider context and consideration of the global financial outlook, an economic and borrowing update for the third quarter is considered in Appendix D.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. The Council receives its treasury advice from Link Asset Services. Their latest interest rate forecasts to 31 March 2027 are shown below. The Bank Rate remained at 5.25% during quarter 4 however it is anticipated that the rate will reduce during 2024/25.

Link Group Interest Rate View 25.03.24		Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27
BANK RATE		5.25	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
3 month ave earnings		5.30	5.30	4.80	4.30	3.80	3.30	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
6 month ave earnings		5.20	5.10	4.60	4.10	3.70	3.30	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10
12 month ave earnings		5.00	4.90	4.40	3.90	3.60	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.20	3.20
5 yr PWLB		4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.50
10 yr PWLB		4.70	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70
25 yr PWLB		5.20	5.10	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10
50 yr PWLB		5.00	4.90	4.70	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.10	4.00	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90

- 8.2. The Council aims to achieve the optimum return on investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity. In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to:
- Keep investments short term (up to 1 year),
 - Only invest with highly credit rated financial institutions using Link’s suggested creditworthiness approach, including sovereign credit rating and Credit Default Swap (CDS) overlay information provided by Link.
- The Finance Team continue to take a prudent approach keeping investments short term and with the most highly credit rated organisations.
- 8.3. In the fourth quarter of 2023/24 the internal treasury team outperformed its benchmark by 0.31%. The investment return was 5.50% compared to the benchmark of 5.19%. This amounts to additional income of £43,330 during the quarter which is included in the Council’s outturn position in the financial outturn position.
- 8.4. A full list of investments held as at 31 March 2024, compared to Link’s counterparty list, and changes to Fitch, Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s credit ratings are shown within Link’s Monthly Investment Analysis Review at Appendix 1. None of the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were breached during the fourth quarter of 2023/24. Officers continue to monitor the credit ratings of institutions on a daily basis. Delegated authority has been put in place to make any amendments to the approved lending list.

- 8.5 As illustrated above it is unlikely that investment rates in the market will increase above the current level of 5.25%. The average level of funds available for investment purposes in the fourth quarter of 2023/24 was £57million.

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

Council, 2 March 2023 – Treasury Strategy 2023/24

Cabinet, 6 September 2023 – Treasury Management Update Quarter 1 2023/24

Cabinet, 22 November 2023 – Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2023/24

Cabinet, 21 February 2024 – Treasury Management Update Quarter 3 2023/24

Local Member: N/A

Appendices

- A. Shropshire Council Monthly Investment Analysis Review as at 31 March 2024 (provided by Link Group)
- B. Prudential Indicators for Quarter 4 2023/24
- C. Prudential Borrowing Schedule
- D. Economic Background and Borrowing Update

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Shropshire Council

Monthly Investment Analysis Review

March 2024

Monthly Economic Summary

General Economy

The UK Manufacturing PMI rose to 49.9 in March from 47.5 in February, some way above market expectations of 47.8. UK factory activity nearly “stabilised” (ie a reading of 50 divides expansion from contraction), but still recorded a twentieth consecutive monthly contraction. Within the headline reading, subcomponents showed that manufacturers experienced the fastest expansion in new orders since May 2022, causing factories to increase production levels for the first time in a year and sparking renewed optimism, despite higher borrowing costs. However, on the pricing front, manufacturers observed accelerating input costs yet again with continued supply chain disruption as shippers avoid the Red Sea. Meanwhile, the UK Services PMI edged lower to 53.4 from 53.8 in February and below market expectations of an unchanged reading. This represented the slowest growth in business activity for three months, with firms linking it to constraints on households’ disposable income. Consequently, the UK composite PMI fell to 52.9 in March from 53 in February and slightly below market expectations of 53.1. Nonetheless, it was the fifth consecutive month of expansion for the UK private sector driven by a strong rate of output growth. This added to expectations that the UK would avoid a third consecutive negative quarterly growth reading in Q1, meaning that the mildest of recessions seen in the second half of 2023 was now concluded. Meanwhile, the UK construction PMI increased to 49.7 in February from 48.8 in January (it is released on a one-month lag to other sector reports), the highest since August 2023.

The UK economy expanded 0.2% m/m in January, following a 0.1% contraction in December and matching market expectations. Services output rose by 0.2% with strong retail trade and construction output rebounded by 1.1% after a poor December. However, industrial output fell by 0.2% in January after a 0.6% rise in December. Elsewhere, the UK’s trade deficit widened to £3.129 billion in January, after a three-month low in December, driven by a 1.4% rise in imports, compared to a 0.7% rise in exports.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, presented his 2024 Spring Budget. It aimed to boost the economy following the weaker performance in the second half of 2023 and ahead of the expected general election later this year. One key point was the 2p cut in National Insurance Contributions following on from the cut in the previous Autumn Statement to reduce tax burdens and support household finances.

The UK recorded a fall in 21,000 jobs in the three months prior to January, below market expectations of a 10,000 increase and following a 72,000 growth in the prior period. This was the first fall in job creation since September 2023. Meanwhile, average weekly earnings (including bonuses) in the UK increased 5.6% y/y in the three months to January, the least since July 2022, and slightly below market expectations of 5.7%. The unemployment rate edged up to 3.9% between November 2023 and January, just above the previous quarter increase of 3.8% and slightly above market expectations of no change.

Regarding inflation, the monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 0.6%, reversing the 0.6% fall in January. However, base effects meant the headline annual rate dropped to 3.4% in February, reaching its lowest level since September 2021. The rate of price pressures declined significantly for food and non-alcoholic beverages, and restaurants and hotels, while there was also a slowdown in miscellaneous goods and services. Costs also fell at a slower pace for both housing and utilities and transport. The annual core inflation rate, excluding food and energy, fell to 4.5 % from 5.1% the prior month.

The Bank of England decided to keep Bank Rate at 5.25% in its March meeting as it waits to be certain that the country’s inflationary pressures have subsided back towards its target rate. The Monetary Policy Committee voted 8-1 in favour of keeping rates unchanged, with one member voting for a 25-basis point decrease. In the retail sector, sales remain unchanged in February after an upwardly revised 3.6% increase in January and beating market expectations of a 0.3% decline.

Page 73

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Shropshire Council

Current Investment List

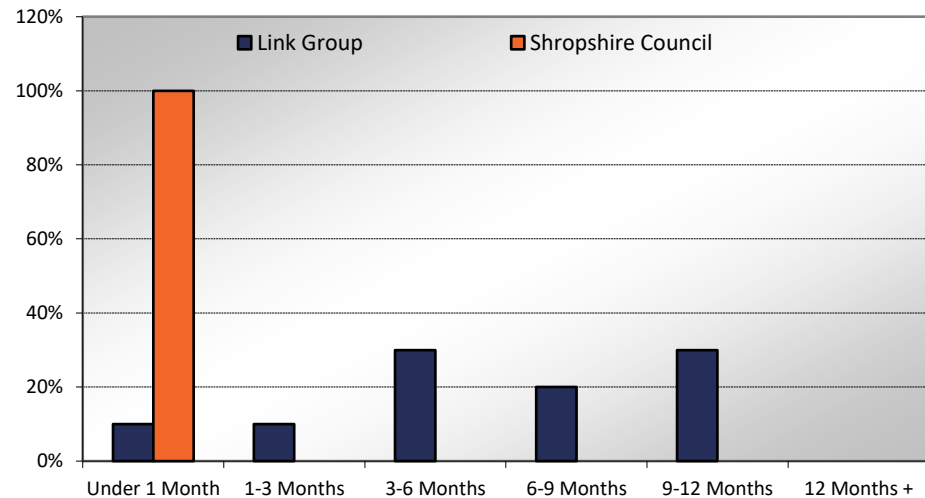
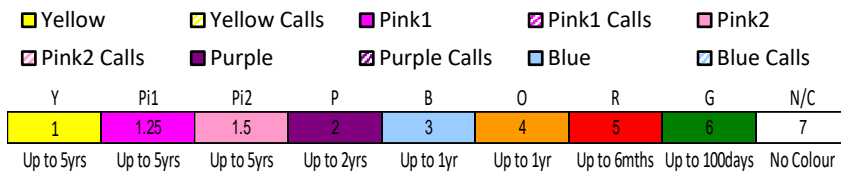
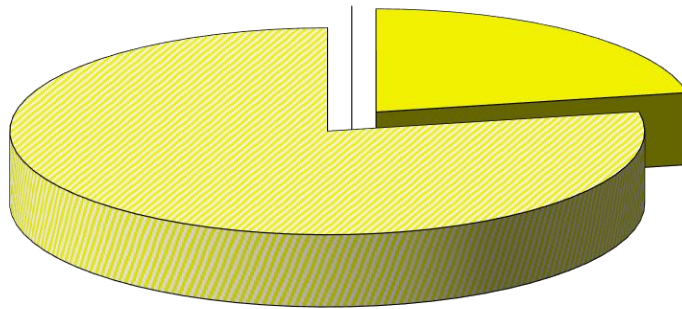
Borrower	Principal (£)	Interest Rate	Start Date	Maturity Date	Lowest LT / Fund Rating	Historic Risk of Default	Expected Credit Loss (£)
MMF Aberdeen Standard Investments	15,000,000	5.26%		MMF	AAAm		
MMF Insight	13,400,000	5.26%		MMF	AAAm		
DMO	5,000,000	5.19%	28/03/2024	03/04/2024	AA-	0.000%	0
DMO	3,000,000	5.19%	28/03/2024	04/04/2024	AA-	0.000%	0
Total Investments	£36,400,000	5.25%				0.000%	£0

Note: An historic risk of default is only provided if a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and is not provided for an MMF or USDBF, for which the rating agencies provide a fund rating. The portfolio's historic risk of default therefore measures the historic risk of default attached only to those investments for which a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and also does not include investments which are not rated.

The Historic Risk of Default column is based on the lowest long term rating. If clients are using this % for their Expected Credit Loss calculation under IFRS 9, please be aware that the Code does not recognise a loss allowance where the counterparty is central government or a local authority since relevant statutory provisions prevent default. For these instruments, the Expected Credit Loss will be nil. Please note that we are currently using Historic Default Rates from 1990-2023 for Fitch, 1983-2023 for Moody's, S&P data was not available at the time of completion of this report..

Where Link Group have provided a return for a property fund, that return covers the 12 months to December 2023, which are the latest returns currently available.

Portfolio Composition by Link Group's Suggested Lending Criteria



Portfolios weighted average risk number = 1.00

WARoR = Weighted Average Rate of Return

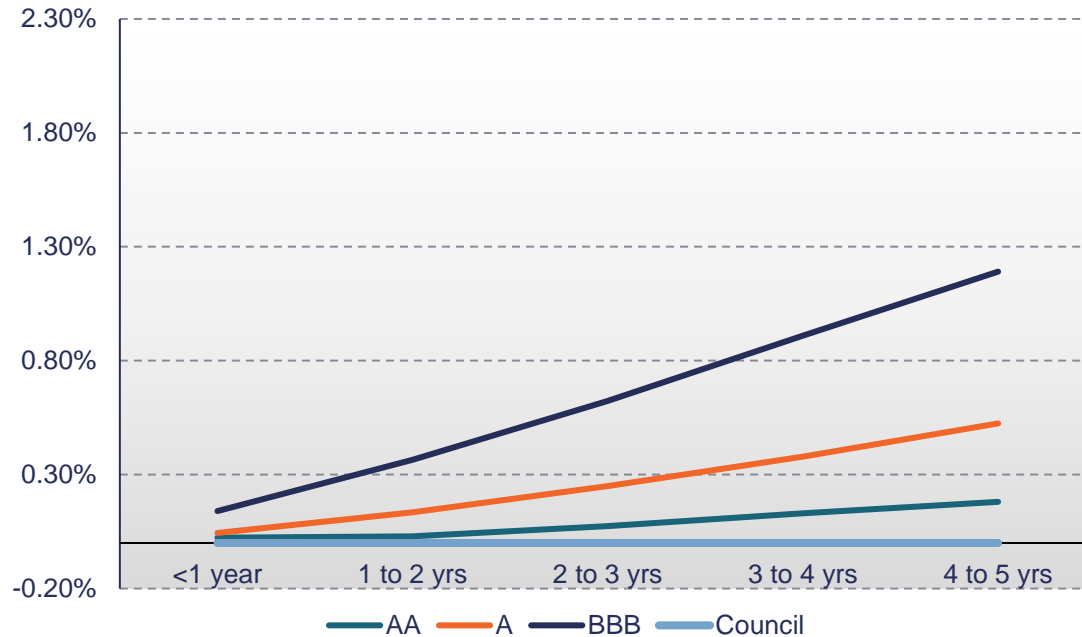
WAM = Weighted Average Time to Maturity

Excluding Calls/MMFs/USDBFs										
	% of Portfolio	Amount	% of Colour in Calls	Amount of Colour in Calls	% of Call in Portfolio	WARoR	WAM	WAM at Execution	WAM	WAM at Execution
Yellow	100.00%	£36,400,000	78.02%	£28,400,000	78.02%	5.25%	1	1	3	6
Pink1	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Pink2	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Purple	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Blue	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Orange	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Red	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Green	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
No Colour	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Total	100.00%	£36,400,000	78.02%	£28,400,000	78.02%	5.25%	1	1	3	6

Shropshire Council

Investment Risk and Rating Exposure

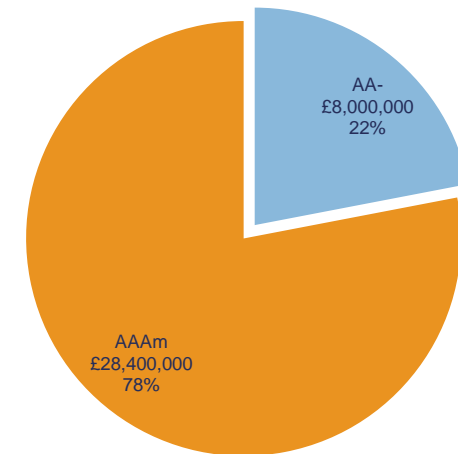
Investment Risk Vs. Rating Categories



Historic Risk of Default

Rating/Years	<1 year	1 to 2 yrs	2 to 3 yrs	3 to 4 yrs	4 to 5 yrs
AA	0.02%	0.03%	0.07%	0.13%	0.18%
A	0.04%	0.13%	0.25%	0.38%	0.52%
BBB	0.14%	0.36%	0.62%	0.91%	1.19%
Council	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Rating Exposure



Historic Risk of Default

This is a proxy for the average % risk for each investment based on over 30 years of data provided by Fitch, Moody's and S&P. It simply provides a calculation of the possibility of average default against the historical default rates, adjusted for the time period within each year according to the maturity of the investment.

Chart Relative Risk

This is the authority's risk weightings compared to the average % risk of default for "AA", "A" and "BBB" rated investments.

Rating Exposures

This pie chart provides a clear view of your investment exposures to particular ratings.

Note: An historic risk of default is only provided if a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and is not provided for an MMF or USDBF, for which the rating agencies provide a fund rating. The portfolio's historic risk of default therefore measures the historic risk of default attached only to those investments for which a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and also does not include investments which are not rated.

Shropshire Council

Monthly Credit Rating Changes FITCH

Date	Update Number	Institution	Country	Rating Action
20/03/2024	2010	Qatar	Qatar	The Sovereign Rating was upgraded to 'AA' from 'AA-'. The Outlook on the Sovereign Rating was changed to Stable from Positive.
22/03/2024	2011	Clydesdale Bank PLC	United Kingdom	The Short Term Rating was placed on Postive Watch.
25/03/2024	2015	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	The Outlook on the Sovereign Rating was changed to Stable from Negative.
28/03/2024	2016	Qatar National Bank	Qatar	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'A+' from 'A'. The Outlook on the Long Term Rating was changed to Stable from Positive.

Shropshire Council

Monthly Credit Rating Changes MOODY'S

Date	Update Number	Institution	Country	Rating Action
06/03/2024	2003	National Australia Bank Ltd.	Australia	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'Aa2' from 'Aa3'.
06/03/2024	2003	Westpac Banking Corp.	Australia	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'Aa2' from 'Aa3'.
06/03/2024	2003	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd.	Australia	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'Aa2' from 'Aa3'.
06/03/2024	2003	Commonwealth Bank of Australia	Australia	The Stable Outlook on the Long Term Rating was removed. The Long Term Rating was placed on Positive Watch.
06/03/2024	2003	Macquarie Bank Ltd.	Australia	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'Aa2' from 'A1'.
08/03/2024	2004	Clydesdale Bank PLC	United Kingdom	The Outlook on Long Term Rating was changed to Positive from Stable.
12/03/2024	2005	Co-operative Bank PLC (The)	United Kingdom	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'Baa3' from 'Ba1' and the Short Term Rating was upgraded to 'P-3' from 'NP'.
15/03/2024	2006	Bayerische Landesbank	Germany	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'Aa2' from 'Aa3'.
15/03/2024	2007	Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen Girozentrale	Germany	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'Aa2' from 'Aa3'.
15/03/2024	2008	Norddeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale	Germany	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'Aa2' from 'Aa3'.
15/03/2024	2009	Landesbank Baden-Württemberg	Germany	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'Aa2' from 'Aa3'.
22/03/2024	2012	Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB	Sweden	The Outlook on the Long Term Rating was changed to Positive from Stable.
22/03/2024	2014	Clydesdale Bank PLC	United Kingdom	The Positive Outlook on the Long Term Rating was removed. The Long Term Rating and Short Term Rating were placed on Positive Watch.

Shropshire Council

Monthly Credit Rating Changes S&P

Date	Update Number	Institution	Country	Rating Action
22/03/2024	2013	Clydesdale Bank PLC	United Kingdom	The Stable Outlook on the Long Term Rating was removed. The Long Term Rating and Short Term Rating were placed on Positive Watch.

Whilst Link Group makes every effort to ensure that all the information it provides is accurate and complete, it does not guarantee the correctness or the due receipt of such information and will not be held responsible for any errors therein or omissions arising there from. All information supplied by Link Group should only be used as a factor to assist in the making of a business decision and should not be used as a sole basis for any decision. The Client should not regard the advice or information as a substitute for the exercise by the Client of its own judgement.

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APPENDIX B – PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR QUARTER 4

Prudential Indicator	2023/24 Indicator £m	Quarter 1 – Actual £m	Quarter 2 – Actual £m	Quarter 3 – Actual £m	Quarter 4 – Actual £m
Non HRA Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	462	336	336	336	336
HRA CFR	105	105	105	105	105
Gross borrowing	445	286	286	286	311
Investments	140	69	58	40	36
Net borrowing	305	217	228	246	275
Authorised limit for external debt	546	286	286	286	311
Operational boundary for external debt	475	286	286	286	311
Limit of fixed interest rates (borrowing)	534	286	286	286	311
Limit of variable interest rates (borrowing)	267	0	0	0	0
Internal Team Principal sums invested > 364 days	70	0	0	0	0
Maturity structure of borrowing limits	%	%	%	%	%
Under 12 months	15	0	0	0	0
12 months to 2 years	15	0	0	0	10
2 years to 5 years	45	0	0	0	0
5 years to 10 years	75	23	23	23	24
10 years to 20 years	100	28	28	28	26
20 years to 30 years	100	25	25	25	20
30 years to 40 years	100	12	12	12	11
40 years to 50 years	100	2	2	2	2
50 years and above	100	10	10	10	7

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APPENDIX C -PRUDENTIAL BORROWING SCHEDULE

Prudential Borrowing Approvals	Date Approved	Amount Approved £	Applied (Spent) 2006/07 £	Applied (Spent) 2007/08 £	Applied (Spent) 2008/09 £	Applied (Spent) 2009/10 £	Applied (Spent) 2010/11 £	Applied (Spent) 2011/12 £	Applied (Spent) 2012/13 £	Applied (Spent) 2013/14 £	Applied (Spent) 2014/15 £	Applied (Spent) 2015/16 £	Applied (Spent) 2016/17 £	Applied (Spent) 2017/18 £	Applied (Spent) 2018/19 £	Applied (Spent) 2019/20 £	Applied (Spent) 2020/21 £	Applied (Spent) 2021/22 £	Applied (Spent) 2022/23 £	Budgeted 2023/24 £	Budgeted 2024/25 £	Budgeted 2025/26 £	Budgeted 2026/27 £	Budgeted 2027/28 £	First year MRP Charged	Asset Life	Final year MRP Charged				
Monkmoor Campus Capital Receipts Shortfall -Cashflow Applied:	24/02/2006 24/02/2006	3,580,000 5,000,000																													
Monkmoor Campus William Brooks Tern Valley			3,000,000		0		3,580,000																				2007/08	25	2031/32		
					2,000,000																						2011/12	25	2035/36		
		8,580,000	3,000,000	0	2,000,000	0	3,580,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Highways	24/02/2006	2,000,000	2,000,000																								2007/08	20	2026/27		
Accommodation Changes	24/02/2006	650,000	410,200	39,800																							2007/08	6	2012/13		
Accommodation Changes - Saving	31/03/2007	(200,000)																													
		450,000	410,200	39,800	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0						
The Ptarmigan Building	05/11/2009	3,744,000			3,744,000																						2010/11	25	2034/35		
The Mount McKinley Building	05/11/2009	2,782,000			2,782,000	-																					2011/12	25	2035/36		
The Mount McKinley Building	05/11/2009	0																									2011/12	5	2015/16		
Capital Strategy Schemes - Potential Capital Receipts shortfall - Desktop Virtualisation	25/02/2010	187,600			187,600	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	0.00	-											2010/11	5	2014/15		
Carbon Efficiency Schemes/Self Financing	25/02/2010	1,512,442				115,656	1,312,810	83,976	-	-	-	-	-	0.00	-												2011/12	5	2017/18		
Transformation schemes		92,635			92,635	-	-	-	-																		2012/13	3	2014/15		
Renewables - Biomass - Self Financing	14/09/2011	92,996				82,408	98,258	(87,670)	-																		2014/15	25	2038/39		
Solar PV Council Buildings - Self Financing	11/05/2011	56,342				1,283,959	124,584	(1,352,202)	-																		2013/14	25	2038/39		
Depot Redevelopment - Self Financing	23/02/2012	0				-	-	-	-																		2014/15	10	2023/24		
Oswestry Leisure Centre Equipment - Self Financing	04/04/2012	124,521				124,521																					2012/13	5	2016/17		
Leisure Services - Self Financing	01/08/2012	711,197				711,197																					2013/14	5	2016/17		
Mardol House Acquisition	26/02/2015	4,160,000									4,160,000	-															2015/16	25	2039/40		
Mardol House Adaptation and Refit	26/02/2015	3,340,000					167,640.84	3,172,358.86	-	-	0.00	-															2016/17	25	2041/42		
Oswestry Leisure Centre Equipment - Self Financing	01/08/2012	290,274												274,239	16,035												2018/19	5	2022/23		
Garage Parking Strategy Implementation	17/01/2018	590,021												588,497.06	1,524												2020/21	5	2024/25		
PUT - Investment in Units re Shrewsbury Shopping Centres	13/12/2017	55,299,533												52,204,603	-208,569.18	2,791,967	320,079.38	191,453								2018/19	45	2042/43			
PUT - SSC No 1 Ltd	13/12/2017	527,319												527,319																	
CDL Shareholding	28/02/2019	1															1										2021/22				
Shrews's Residential Care	28/02/2019	2,000,000												1,381,539	230,765	38,486.70	316,209.69	33,000								2020/21	25	2044/45			
Pride Hill Shopping Centre Reconfiguration - LEP Match	19/12/2019	1,928,978												434,027	842,293	652,658.49											AUC	45			
Pride Hill Shopping Centre Reconfiguration - Feb 22 approval	01/02/2022	2,377,000																197,614.21	1,179,386	1,000,000							AUC	45			
Multi Agency Hub - Feb 22 approval	01/02/2022	3,146,000																		2,146,000	1,000,000							AUC	45		
Greenacres Supported Living Development	24/09/2020	3,125,000																34,317	41,687.50				1,048,995	2,000,000		2023/24	25	2046/47			
Bishops Castle Business Park	19/09/2019	3,111,899														2,900	1,545,647	1,271,102.21	42,250	250,000						2023/24	25	2044/45			
Whitchurch Medical Practice (Pauls Moss Development)	26/07/2018	3,778,228																171,509.07	2,106,719	1,500,000						2023/24	25	2047/48			
Oswestry Castleview - Site Acquisition	19/12/2019	3,256,241													3,256,241												2020/21	25	2044/45		
Former Morrisons Site, Oswestry	19/09/2019	3,390,145														3,390,145											2021/22	25	2045/46		
Meole Brace Pitch & Putt		5,400,000																11,927	136,348.64	248,310	2,003,415	2,500,000	500,000				AUC	25			
Maesbury Solar Farm		2,041,173																	19,681.65	21,491	500,000	1,000,000	500,000					AUC	25		
Commercial Investment Fund	Fin Strat 19/20	3,483,239																			3,535	1,479,704	1,000,000	1,000,000			2021/22	25	2044/45		
The Tannery Development Block A - Land Acquisition		657,253																62,500	594,752.50								2022/23	25	2045/46		
The Tannery Development Block A		6,356,606																				56,606	1,300,000	2,500,000	2,500,000				AUC		
The Tannery Development - Block B & C		7,467,802															#####	3,456,019	311,325	16,614	3,846.79	2,153					2019/20	25	2045/46		
Oswestry Property Acquisition	12/05/2022	3,332,304																		3,332,303.71							2023/24	25	2047/48		
Shrewsbury Property Acquisition		3,837,012																		3,837,011.50							2023/24	25	2047/48		
Biochar Pyrolysis Project		2,000,000																			500,000	1,500,000					2023/24	25	2047/48		
Recycling Bin Roll Out Programme		2,029,778																		4,395	2,025,383.79						2022/23	10	2032/33		
Highways Investment Programme	Capital Strat Feb 22	27,903,001																	3,983,412	18,011,589.00	0	3,578,000	2,330,000				2022/23	25	2046/47		
Oswestry Innovation Park		10,028,332																		3,496,019	6,532,313						2022/23	25	2046/47		
Cambrian Building Oswestry - UKSPF		270,107																			270,107						2022/23	25	2046/47		
Whitchurch Swimming & Leisure Facility	22/09/2022	13,100,282																		390,953.68	2,739,046	7,269,718	2,067,303	633,261			2026/27	40	2065/66		
Previous NSDC Borrowing		955,595			821,138	134,457																					2009/10	5/25	2065/66		
		199,516,853	5,410,200	39,800	2,821,138	6,848,057	3,695,656	2,896,333	1,018,015	(1,439,872)	4,327,641	3,172,359	0	53,006,161	4,057,772	10,903,325	4,689,242.81	6,731,043.78	31,002,652.43	12,017,909	25,939,863	11,697,303	6,182,256	4,500,000							

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Economic Background and Borrowing Update

Economic Background

The fourth quarter of 2023/24 saw:

- A 0.3% m/m decline in real GDP in Quarter 4;
- The labour market loosened in January and surveys suggest that further falls in wage growth are projected;
- Widespread falls in core inflation and services inflation in February with a baseline figure of 3.4% which is the lowest since September 2021;
- The Bank of England holding rates at 5.25% in March;
- The relative fall in UL market rate expectations has further reduced two-year gilt yields.

The UK economy expanded 0.2% m/m in January, following a 0.1% contraction in December and matching market expectations. This pushed the economy into a technical recession as GDP fell 0.3% in the three months to December following a fall of 0.1% in the previous quarter.

Services output rose by 0.2% with strong retail trade and construction output rebounded by 1.1% after a poor December. However, industrial output fell by 0.2% in January after a 0.6% rise in December. Elsewhere, the UK's trade deficit widened to £3.129 billion in January, after a three-month low in December, driven by a 1.4% rise in imports, compared to a 0.7% rise in exports.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, presented his 2024 Spring Budget. It aimed to boost the economy following the weaker performance in the second half of 2023 and ahead of the expected general election later this year. One key point was the 2p cut in National Insurance Contributions following on from the cut in the previous Autumn Statement to reduce tax burdens and support household finances.

The UK recorded a fall in 21,000 jobs in the three months prior to January, below market expectations of a 10,000 increase and following a 72,000 growth in the prior period. This was the first fall in job creation since September 2023. Meanwhile, average weekly earnings (including bonuses) in the UK increased 5.6% y/y in the three months to January, the least since July 2022, and slightly below market expectations of 5.7%. The unemployment rate edged up to 3.9% between November 2023 and January, just above the previous quarter increase of 3.8% and slightly above market expectations of no change.

The monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) fell by 0.6% but the headline annual rate remained unchanged at 4.0% in January. The monthly CPI rose by 0.6% in February, reversing the 0.6% fall in January. However base effects meant that the headline annual rate dropped to 3.4% in February, reaching its lowest level since September 2021. The rate of price pressures declined significantly for food and non-

alcoholic beverages, and restaurants and hotels, while there was also a slowdown in miscellaneous goods and services. Costs also fell at a slower pace for both housing and utilities and transport. The annual core inflation rate, excluding food and energy, fell to 4.5 % from 5.1% the prior month.

A summary overview of the future path of Bank Rate

The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) left the Bank Rate unchanged, at 5.25%, for a fifth consecutive meeting in March, as widely expected by markets. The voting split was revised in comparison to the previous meeting vote in February, as all but one member of the MPC voted to leave rates unchanged versus the one vote for an immediate rate cut. For the first time since September 2021, no member voted for rate hike. Despite the sign of potential easing in rates later this year, the warning to markets remained on reining in expectations on the starting point and pace of future rate cuts, as Governor Bailey urged caution that the MPC was "not yet at the point where we can cut interest rates".

Borrowing

It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the "Affordable Borrowing Limits". The Council's approved Treasury and Prudential Indicators (affordability limits) are included in the approved Treasury Management Strategy. A list of the approved limits is shown in Appendix B. The Prudential Indicators were not breached during the fourth quarter of 2023/24 and have not been previously breached. The schedule at Appendix C details the Prudential Borrowing approved and utilised to date.

Despite medium and long term borrowing being an approved part of the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council, the high levels of cash balances (peaking at more than £150m) held by the Council since the Covid-19 Pandemic of 2020 has prevented the necessity of any borrowing activity for several years. The Council has been utilising cash balances to internally "borrow" for prudential borrowing schemes. This has enabled the Council to benefit from saving on interest costs compared to the returns that could be generated on the cash balances. This approach is effective during periods where the Council holds significant cash balances.

As cash balances have reduced, as expected and following reductions in grant funding, loans reaching maturity and changes in spend activity, opportunities taken to defer external borrowing and utilise cash balances to borrow internally (saving money in the short term on external interest costs) will now be reviewed over the coming twelve months.

Initially, borrowing of £30million was agreed for a 12 month period during the last quarter. Given that the bank rate is current at 5.25% and PWLB rates are still high, it was decided that this loan would only be taken out for a period of 12 months, as it is expected that interest rates will be lower in 12 months' time if the Bank rate is reduced as projected. It is anticipated that a full review of the Council's borrowing levels will be performed in 2024/25.

PWLB rates increased overall in the quarter with increases in January and February being partially offset by reductions during. The table below shows the high/low/average PWLB rates for the fourth quarter.

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
Low	5.37%	4.44%	4.72%	5.23%	4.97%
Date	02/01/2024	02/01/2024	02/01/2024	02/01/2024	02/01/2024
High	5.74%	5.17%	5.26%	5.67%	5.44%
Date	29/02/2024	29/02/2024	29/02/2024	29/02/2024	29/02/2024
Average	5.58%	4.86%	5.02%	5.49%	5.26%
Spread	0.37%	0.73%	0.54%	0.44%	0.47%

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Committee and Date

Transformation &
Improvement Scrutiny
3rd June 2024

Cabinet
5th June 2024

Item

Public



Financial Monitoring Period 1

Responsible Officer:	James Walton		
email:	james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 258915
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Gwilym Butler, Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities		

1. Synopsis

The Council has, for the first time, published a finance report for Period 1. This exceptionally early insight provides Cabinet with assurance that actions are being taken and demonstrates effective systems are in place, reflected in this relatively positive start to the year.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Council, in line with other local authorities, has never produced a Financial Monitoring Report as early as Period 1 before. The reasons for this are entirely practical but given the exceptional financial position Shropshire Council is managing this year, early insight into the year ahead is essential.
- 2.2. The practicalities of producing a meaningful monitoring report from data up to 30 April require a risk assessed approach to be taken with a focus on high level, material, and impactful financial information. Management action over periods 1 and 2 is listed below, ahead of a detailed quarter 1 (period 3) report being produced in the familiar format.
- 2.3. The Period 1 Monitor cannot, of course, provide certainty. Its fundamental aim is to provide an early insight into whether the unprecedented actions being undertaken

by the Council this year have the potential to secure financial survival, initially, and then a path to financial sustainability.

2.4. The key financial issues highlighted by this report are:

- a) Projected savings delivery is currently estimated at £9.668m (15.47%) with a further £38.419m (61.49%) having at least indicative plans in place. **Combined, this is already a potential level of delivery of £48.087m (76.9%) against the savings target of £62.480m.** This is undoubtedly a good start but still leaves a gap in excess of £14m, which is not sustainable.
- b) **A forecast spend variance over budget of £29.006m.** While this forecast triangulates accurately with the developing position for savings delivery and reflects the best information currently available, spending beyond budget to this extent is not a sustainable position. The overall position must be to manage to within (or close to) available budget in all areas. Substantial growth was confirmed by Council to address the pressures identified 2023/24, which will help a balanced position to be achieved.
- c) **An initial General Fund Balance of £38.821m** as a result of combining the brought forward balance of £8.237m with the budgeted contribution to balances of £30.584m. **The forecast spend variance of £29.006m results in a general fund balance at the end of the year of £9.815m.** Again, while representing progress against the balances seen in 2023 and in 2024, use of reserves at that level is not a sustainable outcome. Several substantial risks will continue to be faced during the coming year, and the available £38m must be protected to mitigate those risks rather than offsetting under-delivery of agreed savings.

2.5. Leadership actions

<p>Actions undertaken through period 1 (April)</p>	<p>Engagement with Directorate Leadership Teams (DLTs) to ensure visibility and consistency of all financial information and analysis tools as the new year gets under way.</p> <p>Setting up necessary financial management and monitoring tools for the 2024/25 financial year, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dashboard made available to relevant officers to present the latest budget data as a 'single version of the truth' through which financial performance can be understood - Reconciliation of budget dashboard data back to the budget book approved by council to ensure complete alignment and accuracy - Setting out position statements including growth and savings allocations for all substantive service blocks, also reconciled to the budget dashboard and signed off by managers - Dashboard for all savings made available to relevant officers in order to be able to analyse and review savings delivery in a variety of different ways - Savings tracking being set up for all savings lines to capture expected financial delivery profiles, including narrative on progress, issues, and variances. - Oversight by Senior Managers, all having access to the entire dashboard.
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	<p>Delivering briefings to all relevant officers on the current overall position and how the dashboards described above relate to monthly financial management cycles and reporting.</p> <p>Confirmation of the financial outturn for 2023/24 and any resulting impacts to be considered in delivery of 2024/25 financial objectives.</p> <p>Production and timely publication of Period 1 Report to Cabinet including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of savings delivery line by line in MTFS • Projected outturn by high level service area • Summarised projected outturn by Directorate • Identification of overall projected outturn for the Council, considered to be the 'floor' • Impact on General Fund Balance identified to establish financial survival.
Actions to be delivered through period 2 (May)	<p>DLTs to lead ongoing and enhanced updates to the savings delivery information (which is then automatically uploaded to the savings dashboard).</p> <p>DLTs to lead identification of service areas needing further review and any mitigating actions necessary arising from the budget dashboard as at period The objective is the achievement of budget delivery plans with minimal (less than £5m) net variance to budget.</p> <p>Progression of necessary decisions via Cabinet is planned to support delivery of savings targets through the year.</p> <p>Completion of early work to set out the expectation of the 'resizing' work across the Council with production and confirmation of estimates to follow approval by Cabinet to implement a new Target Operating Model. Initial work focusses on the Voluntary Redundancy programme, review of agency spend and appropriate removal of vacancies.</p> <p>Production and publication of Period 2 Report to Cabinet including (as period 1 above plus):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated publication of savings delivery line by line in MTFS directly from the dashboard • More detailed review of the overall projected outturn for the Council to produce a revised 'floor' and 'ceiling', thereby creating a 'control corridor' for further reporting ahead of the detailed quarter 1 report.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet Members:

- 3.1. Note that the position set out in the report reflects the best information available after the first 4 weeks of the year (with c90% of the year remaining), and hence considerable uncertainty in these early estimates which will be taken forward as a 'floor' position. P2 will be expected to help set out a 'ceiling' position, resulting in a 'control corridor' which can be considered in future reports.
- 3.2. Note that at the end of Period 1 (30th April 2024), the indicative level of savings delivery is £47.907m (77%), resulting in a projected spend over budget of £29.006m for 2024/25.
- 3.3. Note the projected General Fund Balance of £9.815m for 31 March 2025 if the projected spend over budget is realised.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. A more regular review of the emerging financial position for the year is an essential part of the risk management approach of the council during the coming year.
- 4.2. The level of savings delivery and financial pressures in the current year are a recognised risk for the 2024/25 budget, and continued focus and action are being put in place to address this.
- 4.3. Risk table

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
That management actions required to bring the budget into balance do not yield the results being targeted, leading to a larger pressure on the general fund balance.	To further enhance reporting and action planning on financial performance through Directorate Management and Chief Officer teams.
Insufficient reserves to cover projected overspending or other deficits	Improved budget preparation process with more analysis of current and future activity trends. Modelling of current and future reserves levels, including both earmarked and unearmarked, against likely levels of pressure and impact on securing the desirable level of unearmarked (general) reserves. Review of ways in which further funds can be brought into unallocated general fund balances and reserves to support balance sheet repair and reserves improvement with the aim to retain a General Fund Balance within the range of £15m to £30m.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. This report sets out the first financial projections for the Council in the 2024/25 Financial Year. A summary of the key elements for managing the Council's budget are detailed elsewhere in this report.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The Council's Financial Strategy supports its strategies for Climate Change and Carbon Reduction in several ways. A specific climate change revenue budget is held. The climate change schemes involving the Council's assets or infrastructure are included within the capital programme. These two areas of expenditure are anticipated to have a positive contribution towards climate change outcomes.
- 6.2. Securing a robust and sustainable financial base will help the Council meet the challenges of climate change – this is not separate to our budget management, but integral to it, as set out in the objectives of The Shropshire Plan and our aim to secure a Healthy Environment.

7. Forecast Outturn and Implied General Fund Balance

- 7.1. The Council, in line with other local authorities, has never produced a Period 1 Financial Monitoring Report before This is mainly for practical reasons – there is only one month of data, that small amount of data is impacted by carry forwards and brought forwards from the previous financial year that are being worked on over the April and May period, and the Finance Team are focussed on closing down the previous year, providing little time to produce projections for the remaining eleven months of the new financial year.
- 7.2. At Period 1 (April1 – April 30), the Council is initially reporting a forecast overspend by year end of £29.006m.
- 7.3. Table 1 below summarises the position by directorate (see also Appendix 1), including latest projections on funding.

Table 1: Projected Outturn by Directorate

Directorate	Revised Budget (£'000)	Projected Outturn (£'000)	(Under)/Overspend (£'000)	RAGY Classification
Health & Wellbeing	1,055	1,201	145	R
People	220,312	227,724	7,413	R
Place	72,343	84,494	12,151	R
Resources	4,740	7,948	3,207	R
Strategic Management Board	281	(29)	(310)	Y
Service Delivery Budgets	298,731	321,338	22,607	
Corporate	(37,034)	(30,635)	6,399	R
Net Expenditure	261,697	290,703	29,006	
Funded By:				
Council Tax	(205,104)	(205,104)	0	G
Business Rates	(41,306)	(41,306)	0	G
Top Up Grant	(10,925)	(10,925)	0	G

Directorate	Revised Budget (£'000)	Projected Outturn (£'000)	(Under)/Overspend (£'000)	RAGY Classification
Revenue Support Grant	(7,974)	(7,974)	0	G
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	3,612	3,612	0	G
Funding	(261,697)	(261,697)	0	
Total	0	29,006	29,006	

- 8.3 The key area of concern at this early stage of the financial year is the level of savings delivery projected. Further details on the projected level of savings delivery is detailed in section 9 below.
- 8.4 The 2024/25 budget includes a £30.584m contribution to the General Fund Balance. Table 2 details the projected General Fund Balance following this budgeted contribution, but also includes the impact on the Balance should the spend over budget of £29.006m materialise.

Table 2: General Fund Projection

General Fund Balance	£'000
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2024	8,237
Budgeted Contribution 2024/25	30,584
2024/25 estimated spending above budget (as projected at P1)	(29,006)
Balance as at 31 March 2025	9,815

8. Savings Delivery

- 8.1. The current summary position on savings delivery is shown in Figure 1 below (note the 'delivered' values are included within, and not additional to, the 'Projected Delivery' values).

Figure 1: Saving Delivery in 2024/25

£62,479,970 Savings Target	£6,205,575 Delivered	£9,668,099 Projected Delivery	£38,419,301 Indicative Plans	£14,392,570 Not Yet Planned
	9.93% % Delivered	15.47% % Projected Delivery	61.49% % Indicative Plans	23.04% % Not Yet PLanned

9. Capital Receipts Delivery

- 9.1. The Council generally uses capital receipts to help the capital programme, however the Council is also planning to utilise capital receipts to help fund transformation costs and any costs of restructuring services during the course of 2024/25.
- 9.2. The anticipated level of capital receipts required for 2024/25 is circa £30m. Current estimates show projected receipts of £27m, however it should be noted that £7.6m of this projection has been RAG rated Red at this time. Therefore, it is important that delivery of capital receipts is carefully planned.

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

Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2028/29, Council 21st March 2024

Financial Rules

Local Member: All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – 2024/25 Projected Revenue Outturn by Service

APPENDIX 1**2024/25 PROJECTED REVENUE OUTTURN BY SERVICE**

Directorate/ Service	Budget (£'000)	Forecast Outturn at Period 1	Forecast Variance at Period 1	Outline of Variation to Budget
People				
Adult Social Care	131,587	136,370	4,783	Plans are in development for savings of £4.533m, linked to the development of the Council's new Target Operating Model (TOM). A £0.249m pressure relating to transport costs will be reviewed as part of period 2 monitoring and an updated included in that report.
Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	63,321	68,158	4,836	The variance is driven by £1.932m projected spend over budget on Fostering (the majority relating to external fostering (£1.802m), and £1.448m staffing costs overspend, where vacant posts are filled using (more costly) agency staff. Other pressures include £0.795m overspend on External Residential Placements and £0.320m in the Disabled Children's Team.
Early Help, Partnerships and Commissioning	3,288	3,388	100	Largely on budget overall, but with some underlying variances.
Learning and Skills	23,377	25,211	1,834	Projected spend over budget largely due to £1.742m Home to School Transport, specifically SEND-related transport.
People Directorate Management	(1,261)	(5,402)	(4,141)	Overachievement of the budget is due to several savings lines being current attributed to this area prior to reallocation against savings included in budgets elsewhere in the directorate.
People Total	220,312	227,724	7,413	3.3%
Place				
Commercial Services	35,774	40,663	4,891	Savings plans in development for £4.088m; delivery plans are also in development.
Economy and Place	5,835	7,236	1,401	Savings plans in development for £0.317m relating to the TOM. Current performance on income from Planning Applications is lower than anticipated (£0.432m pressure). Other savings lines also in development.
Highways and Transport	15,263	20,752	5,490	Plans in development for savings of £1.578m. Winter maintenance release from reserve applied, but less available than anticipated (£1.2m pressure), recharge to capital for Place (budget £1.500m) to be confirmed. Kier Contract savings target £2.000m, currently forecasting £0.400m achievable, pressure £1.6m.
Homes and Communities	14,935	16,024	1,089	Plans in development for savings of £1.235m.
Place Directorate Management	520	(199)	(719)	Savings targets showing as overachieved by £0.719m here, to be allocated wider across the directorate at Period 2.
Place Total	72,343	84,494	12,151	
Resources				
Workforce and Improvement	78	435	358	Plans are in development for savings of £0.599m. This cost pressure is currently offset by in-year vacancy management savings (£0.101m) across Workforce & Improvement.
Finance and Technology	3,270	4,216	946	Plans are in development for savings of £0.953m alongside service-related savings of £0.454m. Some savings are contingent on a wider decision over how Temporary Accommodation provision is arranged in the future. There are also vacancy management savings across Finance and ICT that are reducing the projected overspend by £0.461m
Legal and Governance	669	723	54	Plans are in development for savings of £0.121m alongside service-related savings of £0.156m. One off savings of have been identified from vacancy management (£0.223m). Considerable pressure continues in the childcare legal team relating to care proceedings.
Pensions	177	177	0	No variance to budget at Period 1.
Resources Directorate Management	10	1,535	1,525	Plans are in development for savings of £1.236m, as well as £0.289m of in year pressures which will be reviewed in P2.
Resources Total	4,204	7,087	2,883	
Health & Wellbeing				
Public Health	417	417	0	No variance to budget at Period 1.
Regulatory Services	639	784	145	Plans are in development for savings of £0.144m.
Health & Wellbeing Total	1,055	1,201	145	
Strategic Management Board				

Directorate/ Service	Budget (£'000)	Forecast Outturn at Period 1	Forecast Variance at Period 1	Outline of Variation to Budget
Chief Executive and PAs	21	(117)	(139)	One off savings of £0.122m have been identified from vacancy management to be incorporated within longer term savings plans.
Programme Management	260	89	(172)	Net underspending forecast at present.
Communications and Engagement	536	861	325	Plans are in development for savings of £0.664m, currently offset by one off savings of £0.339m which have been identified from holding vacancies.
Strategic Management Board Total	817	832	15	
Corporate				
Corporate Budgets	(37,034)	(30,635)	6,399	Plans are in development for savings of £4.250m. Options on how these can be delivered moving forwards are being investigated. Additional savings held in corporate budgets pending allocation to specific areas (£3.000m).
Corporate Total	(37,034)	(30,635)	6,399	
Total Net Expenditure	261,697	290,703	29,006	

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Committee and Date

Item

Public



Recommendation for The Three Parishes of Adderley, Moreton Say and Norton in Hales Neighbourhood Plan to Proceed to Referendum

Responsible Officer:		Mark Barrow	
email:	Mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 258919
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):		Cllr Chris Schofield	

1. Synopsis

This report seeks Cabinet approval to proceed to local referendum on the Adderley, Morton Say and Norton in Hales (Three Parishes) Neighbourhood Development Plan.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to seeks Cabinet approval for the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) to proceed to referendum to determine whether the Plan should become part of the statutory Development Plan for the neighbourhood area, and therefore be used in the determination of planning applications in that neighbourhood area.
- 2.2. The Shropshire Plan recognises the importance of creating a Healthy Environment with a strategic objective to '*maintain, protect and enhance our outstanding natural and historic environment, promoting positive behaviours and greater biodiversity and environmental sustainability*'. The Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan contains policies which strive to encourage development to achieve these objectives alongside those contained within the wider Development Plan for Shropshire.

- 2.3. The Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan (also referred to as the Neighbourhood Plan) has been produced in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (referred to in this report as 'the Regulations'). The plan has been prepared by Adderley, Morton Say and Norton in Hale Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, with Adderley Parish Council acting as the local 'Qualifying Body'. Work on the plan began in 2018 and has included several consultation stages. The draft version of the plan was submitted to Shropshire Council in June 2023, after which Shropshire Council undertook further statutory consultation and appointed an independent person to conduct the examination into the plan.
- 2.4. The purpose of the independent examination process is to ensure Neighbourhood Development Plans meet a set of nationally prescribed 'Basic Conditions', and to recommend if the Plan should proceed to a local referendum. The examination into the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan concluded in April 2024. The Examiner's Report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.5. The Examiner has recommended that the Plan can proceed to local referendum, subject to a number of modifications being made. It is now Shropshire Council's role to consider the outcome of the Examiner's report, including the proposed modifications, and to agree if the plan can proceed to referendum.
- 2.6. The schedule of modifications is shown in Appendix 2. This schedule has followed consideration of the Examiner's conclusions and proposed modifications. Appendix 4 of this report sets out the proposed final 'referendum' version of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is therefore recommended that the 'referendum' version of the Plan proceed to referendum.
- 2.7. If agreed, the referendum will take place on a date to be arranged, but, must be between 18th July 2024 and 29th August 2024. Should the Plan gain public support at the referendum, Shropshire Council's Full Council will be asked to formally 'make' (adopt) the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan to form part of the statutory Development Plan for Shropshire.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet Agrees:

- 3.1. The Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan meets the 'Basic Conditions' and all the other legal requirements as summarised in the Independent Examiner's Report, subject to the modifications proposed in the Schedule of Modifications (Appendix 2)
- 3.2. The required modifications be agreed, and that the final 'referendum' version of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan (April 2024) (Appendix 4) proceed to local referendum.
- 3.3. The referendum area be that as defined as the designated area to which the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan relates.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. Having received a draft Neighbourhood Plan from a qualifying body (normally a Parish or Town Council), it is the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), under regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, to publicise and to seek representations on the Plan. It is also the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority under paragraph 7 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990) to appoint an independent person to assess the Plan. In following these requirements Shropshire Council published and consulted on the submission version of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan for eight weeks from 07th July 2023 to 01st September 2023. In agreement with Three Parishes of Adderley, Morton Say and Norton in Hales. Dr Louise Brooke-Smith was appointed to examine the Plan in October 2023.
- 4.2. Only a draft Neighbourhood Plan that meets the basic conditions can be put to a referendum and be 'made' (adopted) by the Local Authority. The basic conditions, as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the TCPA 1990 that are applied to Neighbourhood Development Plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 are:
- Having regard to national policies and advice contained within guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Plan;
 - The making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - The making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
 - The making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with retained EU obligations;
 - Prescribed conditions are met (in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan) and prescribed matters have been completed in connection with the proposal for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.3. In assessing the Plan, the examiner has three options:
- a) That the Plan proceeds to referendum as submitted;
 - b) That the Plan is modified by the LPA to meet 'basic conditions' and then the modified version proceeds to referendum; or
 - c) That the Plan does proceed to referendum;

The Neighbourhood Development Plan examination is therefore a particularly focussed process, unlike that of an examination applied to Local Plans prepared by Local Planning Authorities. This leaves little in the way of opportunity to actively make changes to improve the plan at this stage, unless these changes (or modifications) are to ensure the Plan meets one or more of the basic conditions.

- 4.4. The Examiner's Report is included as Appendix 1 of this report. It is the role of Shropshire Council to consider the overall conclusions and the proposed

modifications in the Examiner's Report. The Examiner's Report is not binding on the Authority and there may be occasions where it is necessary for the Local Authority to propose a different modification to that proposed by the Examiner or indeed disagree with the need for a modification. However, it is considered there is a risk of legal challenge if the Local Authorities conclusions were to differ significantly from that of the Examiners without appropriate rationale.

- 4.5. The Examiner's report into the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan has concluded that it should be modified by the Local Planning Authority to meet the basic conditions. It is this modified version of the Plan which should proceed to referendum. The Schedule of Modifications attached as Appendix 2 to this report show how the Local Planning Authority has considered each of the modifications proposed by the Examiner.
- 4.6. In this case, officers have considered in detail the recommendations of the Examiner, supported by further discussions with the Three Parishes. It is proposed that the recommended changes to the Plan are incorporated into the final 'referendum' version. It is this version which is before Cabinet and included as Appendix 4. It is considered the proposed modifications are necessary and support the Plan meeting the 'basic conditions'. The changes involve partial amendments to the wording of policies and in some cases partial replacement with a suggested alternative. It is not considered that these changes taken as a whole fundamentally impact on the wider objectives of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.7. The Examiners report notes that the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework), was updated in December 2023 and the NPPF references within the main body of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan relate to 2021 version of the NPPF because that was the relevant version when the plan was prepared. The policy section within the NPPF relating to Neighbourhood Plans remains in place within the 2023 version as does the overall approach to sustainable development and the updated NPPF (2023) does not have any substantive impact on the plan itself. However for the avoidance of doubt as per the Examiners recommendations the Neighbourhood plan is amended to clarify this and make it clear that the referenced NPPF paragraph numbers relates to the 2021 version. The relevant adopted Core Strategy policies and SAMDev policies which the neighbourhood plan policies relate to have also been incorporated into the referendum version of the plan as recommended by the Examiner. A table demonstrating how the Neighbourhood Plan policies link with the policies of the adopted Core Strategy and SAMDev Plans is attached as Appendix 3.
- 4.8. The Examiner suggests within their report that the Qualifying Body may wish to consider pausing the process of the Neighbourhood Plan to await the outcome of the Local Plan Review to enable consideration of any implications arising from that examination. The Examiner acknowledges that this is a decision for the qualifying body however and is content that with the modifications the current Neighbourhood Plan could proceed to referendum. Given that local plan review examination remains ongoing and is currently undergoing a further consultation period it is officers recommendation that this Neighbourhood Plan proceeds to referendum and this is supported by the Qualifying Body.
- 4.9. The Examiner's report recommends that the Referendum Area be restricted to the Neighbourhood Plan Area, which covers the majority of the parish boundaries. A

small area of each of the three parishes is excluded from the Three Parishes neighbourhood area as those areas were already part of the Market Drayton Neighbourhood Area and it is not legally possible for an area to be included in more than one Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst the conclusions of the Examiner for the Market Drayton Neighbourhood Plan meant that the plan was unable to proceed to referendum in its current format this outcome does not alter the extent of the Neighbourhood Area already agreed with Market Drayton and Three Parishes. The Examiner for the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan is content that the neighbourhood Plan area reflects the greater proportion of the Parishes of Adderley, Norton in Hales and Moreton Say and is content that this defined Neighbourhood Plan Area should also reflect the area for any forthcoming referendum.

- 4.10. Assuming the Cabinet approve the Plan to proceed to referendum, the Councils' Electoral Services will administer this process in line with the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations, which specifies that this should take place no more than 56 days from publication of the decision statement. Taking into account the necessary notice periods it is considered the referendum will take place between 18th July 2024 and 29th August 2024. It is considered there is little risk to the Council if this process follows the regulations closely.

Risk table

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
Legal challenge if the Local Authority's conclusions differ significantly from that of the Examiners Report.	Should the Local Authority propose a different modification or disagree with the need for a modification as proposed by the Examiner, an appropriate rationale should be provided.
Legal challenge to the referendum process	This risk is significantly reduced by Shropshire Council administering the process in line with Neighbourhood Plan Regulations and ensuring the referendum takes place no more than 56 days from publication of the Cabinet decision statement

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The Localism Act and Regulations provide that the following costs would fall to Shropshire Council: delivering a supporting role particularly in the latter stages of the Plan's development; appointing an Examiner for the Plan; conducting an Examination and holding a Referendum. Current provisions allow an application for these additional costs to be met, and a reimbursement of the costs will therefore be sought from central Government. From previous experience of organising and managing Neighbourhood Planning referendums it is considered that the likely cost of this process will be met in full by the reimbursement.
- 5.2. The robustness of the Neighbourhood Plan Policies will be tested over time by independent Planning Inspectors on Planning Appeals made under Section 78 of the TCPA 1990. Members are advised that the liability for the future appeal costs rests with Shropshire Council as the Local Planning Authority and as such the usability of such plans and their impact on local decision making will need to be

carefully monitored. However, it should be noted that in seeking approval to proceed to referendum on this Plan, there is agreement that the content of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is in broad conformity with the policies of Shropshire's adopted Local Plan. It is therefore considered that there is very limited risk to Shropshire Council and additional financial liability as a result of this report and recommendations.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The recommendations propose that Cabinet agree to proceed to referendum with the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan. If successful at referendum, the Plan is subsequently adopted by the Council, it will become part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and will be used in the determination of planning applications.
- 6.2. **Energy and fuel consumption:** The Plans policy G3 – Carbon Reduction - encourages energy efficient development and both policy G3 and Plan policy H1 – Housing Design encourage use of alternative renewable sources of energy.
- 6.3. **Renewable energy generation:** The Plans Policy H1 encourages the use of renewal sources of energy generation for new housing. This is also supported within the plans policy G3 which seeks to encourage community renewable energy generation schemes.
- 6.4. **Carbon offsetting or mitigation:** Whilst not specifically identified within the Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Plan is in general conformity with the current adopted Local Plan and the emerging Local Plan Review, which includes a positive policy framework to encourage carbon offsetting and mitigation.
- 6.5. **Climate change adaptation:** The referendum version of the plan includes an objective seeking development mitigates for and enables adaptation to the effects of climate change.

7. Background

- 7.1. Shropshire Council supports Neighbourhood Development Plans being brought forward under the Localism Act and the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, indeed, the Council is legally obliged to do so. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports the principle of Neighbourhood Plans and their status as part of the Development Plan. The NPPF at paragraph 13 states 'Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.' It is also made clear that Neighbourhood Development Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.
- 7.2. Neighbourhood Development Plans must follow a defined regulatory process in both their preparation and adoption. This includes the formal designation of the

area (Regulation 6 stage), the consultation on a draft version of the Plan (Regulation 14 stage), submission to the Local Planning Authority (Regulation 15 stage), and consultation and examination of the Final Draft version of the Plan (Regulation 16 stage).

- 7.3. Adderley Parish Council formally requested in 2018 on behalf of Adderley, Moreton Say and Norton in Hales Parish Councils that the three parishes (excluding the areas of the parishes already included within the Market Drayton Neighbourhood Area) be designated as a Neighbourhood Area. Following a period of public consultation between 24th September – 24th October 2018, this was formally agreed by Shropshire Council on 12th December 2018. Whilst Adderley Parish Council have acted as the 'relevant body' for regulatory purposes, it is understood all Three Parish Councils have contributed to the Neighbourhood Plans preparation. A Neighbourhood Steering Group was established to locally undertake the preparation of the Plan. This group included representatives of all three parish councils. From an early point in the process positive opportunities were provided by Adderley, Moreton Say and Norton in Hales Parishes Councils and the subsequent Steering Group to inform and encourage the involvement of local residents to have their say in the visions and objectives of the plan. A range of means were used including, posters, publication in local parish and church magazines, coffee morning, an open forum, and postal and online questionnaires.
- 7.4. Between 30th November 2022 and 9th January 2023 the three parishes ran a statutory consultation into the pre-submission version of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (Regulation 14 stage). The draft version of the Plan responded to the initial community consultation and survey results and proposed a number of development management policies.
- 7.5. In June 2023 Adderley Parish Council on behalf of the three parishes submitted the submission draft of the Neighbourhood Development Plan to Shropshire Council (Regulation 15 stage), along with the required Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statements. In meeting the statutory requirements, Shropshire Council proceeded to carry out the Regulation stage 16 consultation between 07th July 2023 to 01st September 2023 with statutory consultees and other locally interested individuals and organisations. In October 2023 Dr Louise Brooke-Smith was appointed to examine the Plan. As required by the Regulations, this appointment was agreed by Adderley Parish Council as the Qualifying Body.
- 7.6. Dr Brooke-Smith's examination was carried out as written representations only. In addition to the Plan submission documents, Dr Brook-Smith considered the representations made at the Regulation 16 stage consultation and incorporated this within the Examiner's final report. Officers have liaised with Adderley Parish Council as the qualifying body on the updated version of the Plan, which takes account of the conclusions of the Examiner's report, and they are satisfied that this version of the Plan should now proceed to referendum.
- 7.7. If Cabinet agree for the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan to proceed to referendum, the question will be:

Do you want Shropshire Council to use the Three Parishes of Adderley, Moreton Say and Norton in Hales Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

- 7.8 The Plan will need to gain the support of over 50% of those who cast a vote to be able to move forward to be 'made' (adopted) by Shropshire Council. If this is the case the decision to 'make' the Plan will need to be taken to Full Council. Assuming the recommendations are agreed a final date for the referendum will be formalised after 05th June 2024.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. The appendices to this report provide information on the Examiner's report into the Neighbourhood Plan, the proposed modifications, and the final 'referendum' version of the Plan which incorporates all the required modifications.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. Further to the outcomes of the Examiner's report into the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan, it is recommended that all the necessary modifications are agreed and that the final version of the Plan proceed to local referendum.

List of Background Papers

Cabinet Report 12th December 2018 – Application by Adderley Parish Council for Adderley, Moreton Say and Norton In Hales Parishes to be considered as a Neighbourhood Area

Local Member: *Cllr Wynn (for Adderley and Moreton Say) and Cllr Aldcroft (for Norton in Hales)*

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Examiners Report

Appendix 2 – Schedule of Modifications

Appendix 3 – Table of conformity of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan to the adopted Development Plan

Appendix 4 - Final 'referendum' version of Three Parishes of Adderley, Moreton Say and Norton in Hales Neighbourhood Development Plan

A REPORT TO SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL
OF THE EXAMINATION OF
THE THREE PARISHES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
UNDERTAKEN BY
Dr LOUISE BROOKE-SMITH, OBE, FRICS, MRTPI
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER
APRIL 2024

CONTENTS

(i) SUMMARY AND OVERALL RECOMMENDATION

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION**
 - 1.1 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Regime**
 - 1.2 Appointment and Role of the Independent Examiner**
 - 1.3 The Examination Process**
- 2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE THREE PARISHES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**
- 3.0 COMPLIANCE WITH MATTERS OTHER THAN THE BASIC CONDITIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**
- 4.0 THE BASIC CONDITIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**
 - 4.1 Basic Conditions Statement**
 - 4.2 National Policy, Advice and Guidance**
 - 4.3 Sustainable Development**
 - 4.4 The Development Plan and Strategic Policy**
 - 4.5 EU Obligations and Conventions**
- 5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE THREE PARISHES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES**
 - 5.1 The Overall Presentation and Form of the Plan**
 - 5.2 to 5.8 Neighbourhood Plan Policies**
- 6.0 PLAN DELIVERY, IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW**
- 7.0 REFERENDUM**
- 8.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION**

APPENDICES

Appendix A– Documents reviewed in the course of the Examination

Appendix B – Examiners' use of Abbreviations

Summary and Overall Recommendation

As the Independent Examiner into the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan, I have been requested by Shropshire Council, in its capacity as the Local Planning Authority, to present my professional assessment of the Plan, in terms of its compliance with the 'Basic Conditions' as set out in extant legislation, regulations and guidance.

I confirm that I am independent of the Qualifying Body, led by Adderley Parish also representing Norton in Hales and Moreton Say Parishes, and the Local Planning Authority. Furthermore, I do not have any interest in any land or property that may be affected by the Plan.

I hold relevant professional qualifications and have experience of the planning regime, gained over the past 35 years in both the public and private sectors, to enable an independent judgement of the documents before me. I am also a member of the National Panel of Independent Examiners, endorsed at the time of convening by HMGov Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

I have undertaken a thorough examination of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan. This has comprised a review of all documents presented to me by the Local Planning Authority, a review of documents available for public review on the relevant dedicated Neighbourhood Plan website and documents relating to the extant and emerging Development Plan held on the Council's website plus national guidance, regulations, and statute.

I considered it important to await correspondence from the LPA with regard to updated Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Statements. These were received in April 2024.

*It is my considered opinion that, only with modification, the said Plan meets the Basic Conditions and human rights requirement, as set out in the respective legislation and guidance. **I have highlighted where I consider modifications are required and indicated the nature of those changes. These have been set out in bold throughout my Report and are presented to complement the style of the overall document.***

Hence, with modifications, I consider that the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan will: have regard to national policies and advice contained in current legislations and guidance; contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area; not breach, but be compatible with European Union obligations and the European Convention of Human Rights (that are still endorsed by HMGov); and not likely have a significant effect on a European Site or a European Offshore Marine Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

I consider that the Neighbourhood Plan complies with the legal requirements set out in Paragraph 8(1) and 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, and can proceed to a referendum, if the QB and the LPA wish to proceed at this time. However, the QB may decide to 'pause' the NP while the Shropshire Local Plan review continues to final adoption. This is at its discretion.

However, I have proceeded with my examination on the basis that the relevant parties wish to continue towards a referendum at this time. As such I recommend that my proposed modifications be made in advance.

I have no concerns over the defined Plan area or the manner of its confirmation and consider that this area is appropriate as the extent of any referendum should this be held.

Finally, I refer to several abbreviations throughout my Report and for the avoidance of any confusion these are set out in Appendix B.

Dr Louise Brooke-Smith, OBE, FRICS, MRTPI,

April 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN REGIME

- 1.1.1 The Neighbourhood Development Planning regime provides local communities with the ability to establish specific land use planning policies which can influence how future development comes forward in their area. It not only provides the opportunity for local people to shape their locality, but it also provides guidance for developers and landowners when considering new proposals and for decision makers when determining planning applications.
- 1.1.2 Any Neighbourhood Development Plan should therefore be clear, not only in its goals and ambitions, but also in how any policies are presented. The background behind how policies have emerged should be easy to understand and robust in terms of identifying specific policy or evidence.
- 1.1.3 This Report provides the findings of an Examination into the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan, which is here on referred to as the Plan, the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan, the TPNP or the NP.
- 1.1.4 The Plan was prepared by a Steering Group comprising representatives of the parishes of Adderley, Norton in Hales and Moreton Say (three parishes lying with the County of Shropshire), working in consultation with the Local Planning Authority, namely Shropshire Council and a range of interested parties, statutory bodies, community groups and landowners.
- 1.1.5 This Report provides a recommendation as to compliance with a series of basic conditions and then proceeding to a Referendum. If this takes place and the Plan is endorsed by more than 50% of votes cast, then it would be 'made' by Shropshire Council and would be used to assist in the determination of any subsequent planning applications for the area concerned.

1.2 APPOINTMENT AND ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

- 1.2.1 In accordance with current regulations, I was formally appointed by Shropshire Council, as the Examiner of the Neighbourhood Plan in October 2023. I was issued with the relevant documentation in November 2023 and formally began the examination shortly thereafter.
- 1.2.2 In examining the Plan, I am required, under Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, (TCPA) to establish whether:
- *The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a Qualifying Body.*

- *The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the TCPA as applied to Neighbourhood Development Plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA).*
- *The Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the PCPA (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area).*
- *The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated Neighbourhood Area in line with the requirements of Section 38A of the PCPA.*

1.2.3 My role has also been to consider whether the Plan meets the 'Basic Conditions' and human rights requirements, as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to Neighbourhood Development Plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

1.2.4 In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the making of any Neighbourhood Development Plan must:

- *Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.*
- *Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.*
- *Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area; and*
- *Not breach, and must be otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations.*

1.2.5 Regulations 32 and 33 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) set out a further basic condition for Neighbourhood Development Plans, in addition to those set out in primary legislation and referred to in the paragraph above.

- *The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European Offshore Marine Site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.*

1.2.6 Having examined the Plan against the Basic Conditions, as set out above, and as the Independent Examiner, I am required to make one of the following recommendations:

a) that the Plan should proceed to Referendum, on the basis that it meets all legal requirements.

b) that the Plan should be subject to modification but will then meet all relevant legal requirements and should proceed to Referendum.

c) that the Plan does not proceed to Referendum, on the basis that it does not meet the relevant legal requirements.

1.2.7 If recommending that the Plan should go forward to Referendum, I am also required to consider whether, or not, the Referendum Area should extend beyond the defined Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Area.

1.2.8 As noted above, the role of any Independent Examiner is to assess a Plan in terms of compliance with the Basic Conditions. While it is not to specifically comment on whether the Plan is sound, where changes could be made that would result in removing ambiguity and make the document more user friendly for all parties, this should be considered. This reflects relevant paragraphs of the NPPG and the first basic condition.

1.2.9 It should also be noted that it is not the role of the Examiner to add policies, even if this is suggested by statutory consultees or stakeholders during the Regulation 14 or 16 stages of the Plan's preparation. Where relevant, comments on Regulation 16 representations are noted later in this report.

1.3 THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

1.3.1 I am aware that some of the preparation of the NP took part during a partially restricted period associated with the Covid19 pandemic and I have had regard to the relevant amendments to the salient Neighbourhood Development Planning regulations, first brought into effect in April 2020 by the then MHCLG.

1.3.2 In this case, while some public consultation on the emerging versions of the NP was completed during restricted lockdown periods, the final stages of the NP's preparation were pursued when those restrictions were lifted and thence it has been deemed entirely appropriate to continue to examine the Plan. Any referendum that may be appropriate will take place under the salient regulations as confirmed by the Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing.

1.3.3 Before, throughout and after the pandemic, the general rule has remained in place, namely that examinations should preferably be conducted by written representations unless there is sufficient reason to hold a hearing to explore controversial or ambiguous matters. In this case, I have been able to consider the

Plan by way of the key documents, relevant background information, evidence base, supporting reports and written representations. I have not considered it necessary to hold a hearing to complete my findings.

1.3.4 My examination findings have resulted from my assessment of the documents noted at Appendix A and the written submissions from interested parties at both the Regulation 14 and 16 stages of the NP process and are in addition to my reference to the following documents, which set out extant legislation, regulation, and guidance.

- National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) was issued in 2012 and most recently revised in December 2023. Prior to this the NPPF was revised in 2018, 2019, 2021 and September 2023. However, technically, ***the leading document for the purposes of this Examination is the latest 2023 version published in December 2023.***

This most recent version of the NPPF presents changes to the requirements of providing land for future housing needs. The policy relating to Neighbourhood Plans remains in place as does the overall approach endorsing sustainable development.

I understand that the submission version of the NP was prepared reflecting the 2021 version of the NPPF.

The QB / LPA has the option to note at the beginning of the NP / Basic Conditions Statement that salient NPPF paragraph references are to the 2021 version of that document – or – undertake a review and update any changed paragraph references to the December 2023 version of the NPPF.

I am content to leave this to the discretion of the QB/LPA providing the user of the NP is left in no doubt or confusion as to the NPPF version referenced in the explanatory text through the NP document.

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
- The Localism Act (2011)
- The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) and additions
- The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and associated guidance and regulations.

1.3.5 Finally, I confirm that I undertook an unaccompanied site visit to the Plan area in December 2023.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE THREE PARISHES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 2.1. Further to a formal application by Adderley Parish Council (which I understand has represented the three parishes of Adderley, Norton in Hales and Moreton Say), Shropshire Council confirmed the designation of the greater part of the parishes of Adderley, Norton in Hales and Moreton Say (Three Parishes) as a Neighbourhood Plan Area in December 2018. Adderley Parish Council is therefore assumed to be the leading Qualifying Body.
- 2.2 The extensive area is rural in nature, lies to the north of the rural town of Market Drayton, and butts the County boundary with Cheshire and Staffordshire. I am advised that the NP area comprises the greater part of the parishes of Adderley, Norton in Hales and Moreton Say, with the exception of small sections of each of those parishes, which previously were included in the Market Drayton Neighbourhood Plan. The latter did not proceed to referendum. However, I am content that the defined Three Parishes NP area, minus small parts of each of the parishes in question, is an appropriate area and clearly has been acknowledged as such by the LPA.
- 2.3 General consultation across all three parish areas began in January 2018 in advance of a Steering Group forming which comprised of representatives from all three parish councils. The documents before me, and in the public domain, indicate that regular meetings and consultation with the community and stakeholders continued to take place. This included local presentations, the gathering of baseline evidence, dissemination of details of the progress of the emerging NP via social media and hard copy leaflets, open forums, press articles, school visits and an independent housing needs assessment. I am advised that the Steering Group met regularly, and consideration was given to a series of issues raised by the local community. This led to the formation of a vision and then consideration of specific objectives and policies.
- 2.4 The consultation background to the Plan is set out in the Consultation Statement (CS) (March 2023) prepared in compliance with Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012. I comment below on the CS.
- 2.5 The Plan was subject to some changes as a result of the consultation process and the Reg 14 submissions by third parties between 30th November 2022 and 9th January 2023. A Submission Version was duly prepared and submitted to the LPA. (Although I note that the cover of the document refers to Regulation 16 Consultation Draft). After a formal period of public consultation, the Plan proceeded to Examination.
- 2.6 I have been presented with written representations under Regulation 14 and 16, to the Draft and Submission Versions of the Plan which were submitted within the formal periods. As is common, some representations have been in support of the

emerging NP but equally some have raised objections or comments. I have reviewed them all.

3.0 COMPLIANCE WITH MATTERS OTHER THAN THE BASIC CONDITIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

3.1 Given the above, I now report on the procedural tests, as set out earlier in this Report, and find as follows;

- The Qualifying Body

3.2 From the documentation before me, I conclude that Adderley Parish Council, representing the other parishes of Norton in Hales and Moreton Say, is a properly constituted body, i.e., a Qualifying Body for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, in accordance with the aims of Neighbourhood Development Planning as set out in the Localism Act (2011) and recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (as amended) and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance. Accordingly, I find this addresses the necessary requirements.

- The Plan Area

3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Area reflects the boundaries of Adderley, Norton in Hales and Moreton Say, minus small areas of each of those parishes which have previously been included within a draft NP for Market Drayton. This has been discussed above. I am advised that no other Neighbourhood Development Plan has been proposed for the defined Three Parishes NP area extends to circa 6,000 hectares and is rural in nature with a very low population of just under 1,500.

3.4 A significant feature crossing the area is the Shropshire Union Canal. The countryside either-side of the canal is undulating agricultural land with a local road network linking the villages of Adderley, Norton in Hales, and Moreton Say, plus a number of small hamlets, with Market Drayton and larger conurbations beyond the County boundary.

3.5 As noted above, an appropriately made application to prepare a NP was submitted to the Council by the Adderley Parish Council and duly endorsed in 2018. The appropriate protocols and process were followed. I am satisfied this meets the requirement relating to the purposes and identification of a Neighbourhood Development Plan under section 61G (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and salient regulations of the Neighbourhood Development Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

- **The Plan Period**

3.6 Any Neighbourhood Development Plan must specify the period during which it is to have effect. The Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any date on its front cover and moreover there is inconsistency as to the exact period to which it pertains. The Consultation Statement refers in its text to the period up to 2031 while the Basic Conditions Statement refers to the period of 2016 to 2038.

3.7 **This matter needs to be far clearer, and a date indicated on the front cover of the NP document.**

3.8 I am aware that the extant Development Plan (Local Plan) runs from 2011 to 2026 and a review is being pursued. I comment on this below. I accept that the NP should address a period going forward and hence a direct reference to the extant Development Plan would be inappropriate. I advise that a pragmatic date would be 2023 to 2038, to reflect the emerging Local Plan.

- **Excluded Development**

3.9 From my review of the documents before me, the proposed policies within the NP do not relate to any of the categories of excluded development, as defined by statute and extant regulations, or to matters outside the Neighbourhood Development Plan area. While I find there are some areas which would benefit from improved clarity or amended text, as noted later in this report, in terms of the proposed policies, I find that the Plan meets legal requirements.

- **Development and use of land**

3.10 Any Neighbourhood Development Plan's policies, in accordance with current regulations, should only contain policies relating to development and/or use of land. While supporting text can reflect the goals and ambitions of any community, unless directly relating to development or use of land, this should not be included within or be confused with specific policies.

3.11 Where I feel that a policy, or part of a policy is ambiguous, unnecessarily duplicates other policies or statutory regulations, or concerns matters that do not relate to the development or use of land or property, I have recommended that it be modified or clearly explained as such, within the text of the Plan.

- **Public Consultation**

- 3.12 Planning legislation requires public consultation to take place during the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans. Any public consultation should be open and accessible, and any information presented should be easy to understand and to comment upon. It should enable all sectors of the local community the ability to comment on and hence shape the policies which may have a bearing on where they live, work or spend their leisure time.
- 3.13 I have reviewed the Consultation Statement prepared by the QB. As a requirement of the salient regulations of the Neighbourhood Development Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended, this was submitted to the Council and made available via the LPA and the salient parish websites. I find the document adequate. While reference is made to various consultation exercises and events pursued from 2018 to mid-2023, little data is attached to the Statement or held online.
- 3.14 The Consultation Statement sets out the approach taken by the QB. I am advised that a range of stakeholders including statutory bodies were given the opportunity to take part in proceedings and invited to contribute to the emerging Plan. I have not, however, been provided with a clear list of those parties or whether they formally responded. Nevertheless, given the representations at both Reg 14 and Reg 16 stages, I am content that appropriate parties were involved in the process.
- 3.15 I note that a series of public meetings and open days were held from 2018 and am of the opinion that the consultation exercise involved a sufficiently wide spectrum of the local, professional and statutory community.
- 3.16 I consider that the responses by the QB to representations made to the Neighbourhood Plan, as it progressed through its preparation stages, were generally appropriate. I have reviewed all representations but should stress that my role has not been to undertake a detailed analysis of the consultation details but moreover review the general process and approach taken. In this light, I believe changes to the draft version of the NP were appropriately assessed, undertaken and then explained.
- 3.17 As noted elsewhere in this Report, given the evidence before me, I have not felt it necessary to hold a public hearing, as the comments made by Regulation 16 parties and the stance of the LPA and QB has been clear. No issues have been ambiguous.
- 3.18 I conclude that an appropriate consultation exercise was undertaken and that stakeholders had the opportunity to input into the Plan's preparation and as such, Regulations, 14, and 16 have been addressed.

4.0 THE BASIC CONDITIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

4.1 BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT

- 4.1.1 I have reviewed the Basic Conditions Statement (BCS) (March 2023) and find it to be a relatively clear document, notwithstanding the lack of paragraph numbers which make referencing difficult. The BCS states that the NP covers the period from 2023 to 2038. This conflicts with the end date of 2031 as noted in the Consultation Statement.
- 4.1.2 **This matter needs to be addressed and a clear date indicated on the front cover of the NP, and consistently referenced in all accompanying documents.**
- 4.1.3 The BCS should explain how the NP complies with National Planning Policy (NPPF), the adopted strategic policies for the area and how it contributes towards sustainable development.
- 4.1.4 I have noted elsewhere that, given the recently published amendments, any reference to the NPPF should be clearly annotated in terms of the date of the document used. (See my comments at paragraph 1.3.4 of this Examination Report)
- 4.1.5 Specifically, I note that Tables 1 of the BCS links specific TPNDP objectives to relevant NPPF goals and Table 2 links TPNDP policies to specific NP paragraphs. Strategic development and how NP policies contribute to its achievement is set out in Table 3. These are all helpful but given the recent publication of an amended version of the NPPF, it is important to confirm the version of the NPPF used by the QB. I have presumed that it is the document published in 2021 and examined on this basis.
- 4.1.6 I set out below my observations on the Development Plan Strategic Policies but note that the BCS acknowledged in advance of Table 4 that the LPA is currently preparing a revised local plan for the period 2016 to 2038. This is progressing through its own examination.
- 4.1.7 I note the approach taken by the QB that its NP should reflect the emerging local plan and its relevant strategic policies. Accordingly, Table 4 sets out the emerging Core Strategies and how these are complemented by the proposed policies within the NP.
- 4.1.8 However, while the progress made by the Local Plan review means that it carries weight in the decision-making process, it has yet to be formally adopted. Hence, the extant Core Strategic policies remain those adopted in 2011 and running to 2026.
- 4.1.9 My concern is that although the LPA has confirmed in its Reg 16 submission that the NP policies accord with and reflect the extant Core Strategy policies, no reference to this is included within the BCS. I accept that the emerging Development Plan carries weight given its progress through an Examination in Public (EiP) and Inspectors' interim findings. However, modifications have already been suggested by the

Inspectors, e.g the deletion of Policy SP4 and other modifications may be proposed once the examination has concluded.

- 4.1.10 The BCS currently refers to policy SP4 and cites it in support of a number of proposed NP policies. This will need amending.
- 4.1.11 I am of the opinion that the extant Development Plan is still a valid document. As such, and having reviewed the extant strategic policies, I consider that salient extant Core Strategy policies should be set out in the BCS and cross referenced to specific NP policies.
- 4.1.12 **It would therefore be important for a table to be included within the BCS to indicate how the proposed NP policies comply with the extant Core Strategy policies.**

4.2 NATIONAL POLICY, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

- 4.2.1 As noted earlier, the extant NPPF (2018 and revised publications in 2019, 2021 and twice in 2023) confirms that a presumption in favour of sustainable development means that Neighbourhood Development Plans should support the strategic development needs set out in the Development Plan. They need to plan positively to support local development. This principle has not been amended in the most recent version of the NPPF but for accuracy, I advise that the 2023 version of the NPPF be referenced in the BCS and NP.
- 4.2.2 The Framework is clear that Neighbourhood Development Plans should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area, i.e., they must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan. The NPPF advises that they should not promote less development than is set out in the Development Plan or undermine its strategic policies. Neighbourhood Development Plans should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with predictability and efficiency. It is stressed that my examination has been of the Plan, as a whole.

4.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 4.3.1 Any Neighbourhood Development Plan should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF explains that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. I consider that the approach taken and explained in the Basic Conditions Statement is robust.
- 4.3.2 Whilst there is no legal requirement for any Plan to be accompanied by a separate Sustainability Appraisal, it is helpful for it to acknowledge and explain how its policies

have reflected sustainability matters in all forms as expressed in the NPPF. I consider that the NP has achieved this.

4.4 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND STRATEGIC LOCAL POLICY

4.4.1 I note that the 'Development Plan' for Three Parishes Neighbourhood Area inter alia, comprises the Shropshire Core Strategy (adopted in 2011 and running to 2026) and the Shropshire Site Allocations and Management Development Plan Document (SAMDev), adopted Dec 2015.

4.4.2 I consider that the Development Plan's extant and hence valid strategic policies include:

- CS1 Strategic Approach,
- CS5 Countryside and Green Belt
- CS6 Sustainable Design
- CS7 Communications and Transport
- CS8 Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision
- CS11 Type and Affordability of Housing
- CS17 Environmental Networks

4.4.3 Shropshire Council is currently reviewing the Local Plan which will extend it to 2038. I am advised that a series of Examinations in Public have been held and an interim report issued by the panel of three Inspectors. The Local Plan has not yet been approved and technically the extant Local plan is still used for development management purposes.

4.4.4 Table 4 of the BCS explains how the proposed NP policies are in general conformity with emerging strategic policies and highlights specific policies from the emerging Local Plan. **I find this to be helpful and pragmatic but not in accordance with current NPPG.**

4.4.5 **Hence, as noted earlier, I advise that a further table needs to be prepared that confirms that the proposed policies find that, subject to modifications detailed later in this report, the NP policies are in general conformity with the relevant strategic policies of the extant Core Strategy policies found within the Development Plan.**

4.5 EUROPEAN UNION (EU) OBLIGATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

4.5.1 Notwithstanding the decision by the UK to leave the European Union, any Neighbourhood Development Plan must still be compatible with certain obligations adopted through European statute, as they have been incorporated into UK law. The NP would not be compliant otherwise.

- Strategic Environment Assessment

4.5.2 Directive 2001/42/EC, often referred to as the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Directive, relates to the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, and has relevance here. Similarly, Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (referred to as the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives respectively) aim to protect and improve Europe's most important habitats and species and can have a bearing on Neighbourhood Development Plans.

4.5.3 A Strategic Environment Assessment Screening Statement, dated March 2023, was originally presented to me. I understand that this was prepared by the LPA and has since been updated with a Screening Assessment dated April 2024.

4.5.4 The Statement explains the background to the NP process and correctly advises that NP policies should be assessed against Annex II criteria of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regs 2004. This initial Screening was prepared using the draft NP policies while, appropriately, the more recent Screening was undertaken reflecting the Submission Version policies. The conclusion drawn is that those policies are not expected to have a significant effect on the natural environment.

4.5.5 I concur and note that the relevant statutory bodies were approached and raised no matters of concern.

4.5.6 **I can therefore confirm that the Plan meets the legal requirements of the EU's SEA Directive and conclude that in respect of this EU obligation, the Plan is compliant.**

- Habitat Regulations (HR) and Environmental Impact Assessment

4.5.7 In a similar was, I was originally presented with a Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Statement dated March 2023 which set out the background to the need for a Screening Statement and included a table which assessed each proposed NP policy in terms of its potential to have a 'likely significant impact'.

- 4.5.8 Helpfully, I have now been presented with an updated Habitat Screening Assessment, dated April 2024, which has reviewed the Submission Version NP policies. The conclusion presented is that the policies will not have a significant impact. I concur.
- 4.5.9 I am unaware of any comments from Natural England but accept that they were approached and given ample opportunity to do so. I therefore conclude **that the NP meets the legal requirements of the EU Regulations and that, in this respect, the Plan is compliant.**

- **Human Rights**

- 4.5.10 The Basic Conditions Statement makes reference to compliance with the European Charter on Human Rights (ECHR) and Human Rights Act 1998 on its last page.
- 4.5.11 I am unaware of any matters proposed in the NP that challenge issues of human rights. I do not consider that sufficient or robust evidence has been presented, to indicate that this is not the case. Hence, I conclude that the Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with the ECHR.
- 4.5.12 I am not aware of any other European Directives which apply to this particular Neighbourhood Development Plan, and **hence I am satisfied that the Plan is compatible with EU obligations.**

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE THREE PARISHES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

5.1 THE OVERALL PRESENTATION AND FORM OF THE PLAN

- 5.1.1 The NPPF advises that plans should provide a practical basis within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency. I consider that this can be interpreted as 'having a clear document'.
- 5.1.2 While I find the figures and illustrations generally clear, and these have been inserted appropriately throughout the document, where they are relevant to the policies proposed, the lack of paragraph numbers and a lack of referencing in a number of places, has detracted from the document.
- 5.1.3 Below is a series of comments which I present to the QB and LPA for their deliberation. Some are presented as suggestions and are underlined. If not addressed, they would not make the Plan non-compliant. However, others (in bold) should be addressed if the Plan is to proceed to a formal Referendum. Their inclusion would be important and would remove ambiguity.
- 5.1.4 I have commented below on any figure or map found to be ambiguous or superfluous and which needs to be amended to provide clarity for any user.

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- 5.1.5 The absence of paragraphs throughout the Plan is a matter of style. However, it makes any reference by a decision maker or user of the document difficult. This in itself does not make the Plan non-compliant, but I would urge any redrafting or future review of the document to bear this in mind.
- 5.1.6 The lack of a date on the front cover is not helpful. **This should be addressed for clarity and avoid ambiguity, and the references to the NP period brought into consistency in the Consultation Statement and the BCS.**
- 5.1.7 **Should the NP move forward to a referendum; the initial pages of the document should be amended to reflect the stage reached. The 'Stage' section on page 4 would need to be redrafted and the 'How to comment' section on page 5 should be deleted.** Indeed, I see little reason why this section was included in the main document. Instead, it should have been included in an updated Consultation Statement.
- 5.1.8 The geographical context of the NP area is well set out on pages 6 and 7. **However, Figure 1 needs to be properly titled (Shropshire Union Canal) and referenced in the text at the bottom of page 6.**
- 5.1.9 Figure 2 repeats the map at Appendix 1. Both are difficult to read in hard copy. If they can be reproduced in a more definitive manner this would assist any reader.
- 5.1.10 The reference at the bottom of page 7 to flood risk would be helpfully supported by the addition of an extract from the Environment Agency flood risk map for the area in question.
- 5.1.11 The context of the three parishes is helpfully presented, as is the very general overview of housing provision and heritage properties. However, Figure 3 is presented at a very difficult scale to read in hard copy. While I accept that on screen this figure can be expanded, it would assist any reader if the sites marked were listed out clearly. Cross reference to Appendix 3 would also assist any reader.
- 5.1.12 Reference to the 2011 census is outdated given that the 2021 data has been in the public domain for some time. Consideration should be given to making reference to the most up to date census information.
- 5.1.13 **Landscape and Natural Environment comments from page 13 refers in the first paragraph to the 'Shropshire Landscape Assessment'. However, it is unclear when this was published and who by. This should be clarified, and it would assist any reader if the various areas identified on page 13 are illustrated on the map showing the extent of the NP area.**
- 5.1.14 Figure 11 presents generic views of different land classification and again this would have more relevance if the locations of the various views were included.
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- 5.1.15 Page 15 presents an explanation of the context for preparing the NP. However, this repeats information contained within the BCS, and consultation statement and I consider it to be superfluous for the submission version of the NP. Should the NP proceed to referendum I would advise that it is deleted and / or included within an updated Consultation Statement.
- 5.1.16 Pages 16 and 17 contain text which explains the national and local planning policy. I have commented earlier in this report as to the need to be far clearer as to the version of the NPPF used in preparing the NP. **I have assumed that the QB have used the version issued in 2021. This needs to be clearly explained.**
- 5.1.17 In terms of strategic policy, the NP presents a helpful overview of the current position in Shropshire. It clearly says that *‘.....at the time of preparing this Neighbourhood Plan, the relevant Shropshire Development Plan is the Core Strategy and the SAMDev’*.
- 5.1.18 This is correct, and the associated guidance currently found in NPPG explains that;

‘A draft neighbourhood plan or Order must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in force if it is to meet the [basic condition](#). Although a draft neighbourhood plan or Order is not tested against the policies in an emerging local plan the reasoning and evidence informing the local plan process is likely to be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested. For example, [up-to-date housing need evidence](#) is relevant to the question of whether a housing supply policy in a neighbourhood plan or Order contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

Where a neighbourhood plan is brought forward before an up-to-date local plan is in place the qualifying body and the local planning authority should discuss and aim to agree the relationship between policies in:

- the emerging neighbourhood plan.*
- the emerging local plan (or spatial development strategy)*
- the adopted development plan.*

with appropriate regard to national policy and guidance.

The local planning authority should take a proactive and positive approach, working collaboratively with a qualifying body particularly sharing evidence and seeking to resolve any issues to ensure the draft neighbourhood plan has the greatest chance of success at independent examination.

The local planning authority should work with the qualifying body so that complementary neighbourhood and local plan policies are produced. It is important to minimise any conflicts between policies in the neighbourhood plan and those in

the emerging local plan, including housing supply policies. This is because [section 38\(5\) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) requires that the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to become part of the development plan.

Strategic policies should set out a housing requirement figure for designated neighbourhood areas from their overall housing requirement ([paragraph 65](#) of the revised National Planning Policy Framework). Where this is not possible the local planning authority should provide an [indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body](#), which [will need to be tested](#) at the neighbourhood plan examination. Neighbourhood plans should consider providing indicative delivery timetables, and allocating reserve sites to ensure that emerging evidence of housing need is addressed. This can help minimise potential conflicts and ensure that policies in the neighbourhood plan are not overridden by a new local plan.

Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 41-009-20190509

- 5.1.19 I accept that Shropshire Council, as the LPA, is currently pursuing the Shropshire Local Plan Review (2016 – 2038) and this has progressed to the Examination in Public stage. While this means that the emerging Local Plan carries some weight, it is not formally adopted.
- 5.1.20 Hence bringing forward a NP at a time when emerging policies can still be challenged and/or modified can be difficult. I note that one other party has highlighted the same point at the Reg 16 stage.
- 5.1.21 Nevertheless, I am advised that the QB worked with the LPA and hence I must presume that a decision to move forward with the NP policies that generally comply with the emerging Local Plan policies as opposed to the previously adopted Core Strategy policies, was mutually agreed.
- 5.1.22 I, however, have to be guided by the NPPG on this matter, as set out above.
- 5.1.23 While the QB have suggested that the Core Strategy is out of date and hence it was more appropriate to reflect the emerging Local Plan policies, I do not concur and am concerned that little reference has been made to the extant Core Strategy policies which technically are still valid until 2026, in the NP or the BCS. I note that some reference has been made to documents available on the Three Parishes Plan website threeparishplan.org but this is not easy to view.
- 5.1.24 My concern would have been less had the NP made reference to the emerging Local Plan alongside the extant Core Strategy. However, this is not the case and no clear reference to extant Core Strategy policies has been presented to me.
- 5.1.25 The second paragraph on page 17 accepts that *'The Three Parishes recognise that it will need to consider implications arising from the examination of the Local plan and*

that they may need to pause the Neighbourhood Plan process to take these into account.' I think this is a pragmatic position to take.

- 5.1.26 I turn now to the evidence base. This is discussed on page 19 of the NP submission version. While helpful context, this appears to be a duplication of some of the information included within the Consultation Statement. There is no need to duplicate this, and a summary would have sufficed. More importantly, full details of all evidence and data used by the QB to support the policies pursued in the NP should have been included within the Consultation Statement, or clear links to such evidence been provided. Reference is made to a residents' survey. I have not been presented with either the details of the survey questions or indeed the full results from the survey other than broad comments following some of the proposed policies.
- 5.1.27 The overview of what the survey covered indicates it to be very relevant to the preparation of the NP. **I recommend that for transparency, full details of the questions and responses received need to be in the public domain as they have clearly guided the vision and subsequent policies of the NP.** Without that transparency, the rationale for some policies has been difficult to understand.
- 5.1.28 Reference is made to 'technical evidence' on page 20. I note that some information is available on the Three Parishes Plan website. However, full details of this evidence have not been presented to me. **A list of documents or data used to support the preparation of the NP's vision and subsequent policies would have been helpful to my examination and I consider it would be important to any user of the Plan.**
- 5.1.29 I note that a Housing Needs Assessment was prepared by Aecom, and this informed the housing policies within the NP. Again, no details of this have been presented to me.
- 5.1.30 Finally, before I comment on the vision, objectives and specific policies within the NP, I note that page 21 replicates much of the text contained within the SEA and Habitats Screening Reports. The tense of this text would not be appropriate should the NP proceed to a referendum. Reference is made to draft Screening Reports which accompanied the draft NP at the Reg 14 stage of proceedings. This needed updating for the Submission Version of the NP and would need amending again should the NP move forward through to a referendum or be 'made' by the LPA.
- 5.1.31 In terms of the vision and objectives of the NP I find these to be relatively clear and present a good context for the subsequent policies. My overriding concerns remain that a robust evidence base does not appear to have been made available to the general public or presented to myself as the examiner. And as highlighted elsewhere in this report, no reference has been made to extant Core Strategy policies.

- 5.1.32 I am aware that some consultees, during the preparation of the Plan and at both Reg 14 and Reg 16 stages, suggested additional initiatives and amended text. Some suggestions have been included in the Submission Version of the NP while some have not. I should stress that it is not the role of the Examiner to add further detail to proposed policies or present new policies, which may have been considered by the QB through the Plan preparation, but not included in the Submission Version. The addition of any policies or amendments to the text as the Plan is being prepared, is at the discretion of the QB.
- 5.1.33 Policies are set out from page 24 through to page 44 of the NP, under a series of the following objectives;
- Provision of Adequate Housing
 - Employment Opportunities
 - Natural Environment
 - Transport and Movement
 - Built Environment and Heritage
 - Community Facilities
- 5.1.34 Under each objective, specific policies are set out in boxes, accompanied by explanatory text and reference to relevant evidence and justification. The latter generally refers to NPPF paragraphs and emerging Local Plan policies with only some reference to any 'technical evidence'.
- 5.1.35 As the examiner, I have assessed the policies presented in the Plan. In so doing I have reviewed the objectives and the explanatory text to ensure there is no ambiguity or confusion. Where this exists, I have proposed modifications.
- 5.1.36 In terms of evidence to support the NP policies, I have reviewed the documents in the public domain, which appear surprisingly light, and have considered the third parties and statutory consultees who appear to have been approached during the preparation of the draft and submission version of the Plan. I have only been able to surmise these from the responses received. I have also reviewed the comments issued by the QB and the action taken by the QB through the Plan's preparation.
- 5.1.37 As with many NPs, some criticism has been levied through formal representations. I have therefore given these specific attention and comment, where relevant, on this below.
- 5.1.38 Further to the above, I now consider the NP policies against the Basic Conditions and for ease of reference follow the structure and headings as adopted in the Plan. As I have set out above, I find that the Plan is compliant with Basic Conditions 4 and 5 and the following sections of this Report explain whether I consider it complies fully with:

- Basic Condition 1 (Compliance with National Policy);
- Basic Condition 2 (Delivery of Sustainable Development); and
- Basic Condition 3 (General Conformity with the Development Plan)

5.1.39 I wish to stress that my examination has comprised a review of the policies and supporting text in the context of their compliance with the Basic Conditions. It has **not** comprised a forensic review of the rationale behind each policy. Where I found that the evidence base was unacceptably weak or erroneously interpreted or proposals have been suggested that conflict with extant statute or are ultra vires, I have suggested appropriate modifications. **I stress that it is not the role of the Examiner to re-write elements of the NP requiring modification on behalf of the QB or LPA.** I have proposed amended text where relevant and where I have found policies to be non-compliant. In other cases, I consider that sufficient guidance has been presented so modification can be prepared by the QB/LPA.

5.2 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

5.2.1 I now turn to the specific policies and supporting text.

5.3. HOUSING AND DESIGN

POLICY H1 – HOUSING DESIGN

5.3.1 This policy is relatively general and reads as a catch all policy covering some areas that are addressed in other NP policies. It duplicates national policy found in the NPPF (all versions). While I accept that it reflects policies in the emerging Local Plan, from my understanding, it also reflects policies in the extant Core Strategy – as listed earlier in my report.

5.3.2 The policy is not location specific, and it offers little additional value of it to any user of the NP or decision maker, given other national and local policy and guidance. However, I note that the QB have indicated that the themes that emerged through the consultation process were as indicated in the accompanying text and hence I accept there is some value to the policy being set out as it has, as it presents emphasis to elements of importance to the community.

5.3.3 The accompanying evidence and justification section lacks depth or reference to local consultation responses which could have been included.

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- 5.3.4 My over-riding comment, which will be repeated for every policy proposed in this NP, is that additional reference needs to be presented that sets out the relevant extant Core Strategy policies plus clear reference to any technical evidence or local survey/questionnaire results.
- 5.3.5 Other than duplicating issues that are covered in later NP policies, which I can accept as emphasizing issues of importance to the community, the phrasing of the policy is acceptable.
- 5.3.6 **Subject to the above comments and the need to include references to extant Core Strategy policies, I find Policy H1 compliant.**

POLICY H2 – HOUSING MIX AND TENURE

- 5.3.7 This policy reflects national and local policy but is accompanied by more specific details of the survey undertaken locally. In this way, the nature and approach of the policy is relevant.
- 5.3.8 My concern is that the policy makes specific reference to the emerging Local Plan policy. This has not been formally adopted and hence there remains the potential for it to be amended or challenged. **While I accept that given the progress of the emerging Local Plan, this is unlikely, it would be more appropriate to omit the last sentence of the policy.**
- 5.3.9 **While reference to emerging policies can be made in the accompanying text, this should also refer to extant Core Strategy policy that relates to housing mix.**
- 5.3.10 **With the above modifications, I find Policy H2 compliant.**

5.4 EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

- 5.4.1 This section of the NP appears to relate the landscape setting of the area to new development – although this wasn't highlighted for residential development in the previous section.
- 5.4.2 The emphasis here is that new employment related development needs to take particular care and not have a 'materially negative impact'.

POLICY EMP1 – SMALL SCALE EMPLOYMENT

- 5.4.3 This policy uses the words 'suitable' and 'appropriate' in its first sentence. These can be misleading to any user. Some promoters of development might find their

proposals suitable and appropriate, but the decision makers may take a different view. This isn't helpful.

- 5.4.4 Given the following two areas of acceptable forms of development, the first sentence should simply read as follows;

Development proposals that provide employment opportunities will be encouraged in the following circumstances.....

- 5.4.5 The remaining text can be retained without change. As for all other policies, reference should be made to extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section.

- 5.4.6 **With the above modification, I find Policy EMP1 compliant.**

EMP2 – FARM DIVERSIFICATION

- 5.4.7 This policy specifically addresses farm diversification and is pertinent given the nature of the NP area. However, given the accompanying text explaining the evidence and justification for this policy, **I have concerns that bullet one is unnecessarily restrictive and doesn't accord with either the emerging or extant Core Strategy policies. If the QB only wants to indicate compliance with emerging local policies, then I find this bullet point fails the test and should be deleted.** The last bullet point would suffice in addressing the responses from the local consultation exercise which is summarised in the accompanying text.

- 5.4.8 Many of the bullet points, and specifically the 5th bullet point duplicates Policy EMP1 but I accept that this presents an acceptable element of emphasis.

- 5.4.9 **Hence, with the overriding requirement that reference should be made to extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, and subject to the removal of the first bullet point, I find Policy EMP2 compliant.**

5.5 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

POLICY G1 – PROTECTING OPEN SPACES IN THE THREE PARISHES

- 5.5.1 This policy aims to protect and enhance the environment for the local community and ensure that access is provided to various areas of open space.

- 5.5.2 **With the requirement that reference should be made to the relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, I find Policy G1 compliant without further modification.**

POLICY G2 – PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY

- 5.5.3 The overall approach of this policy is understood but the initial paragraph appears to mix two specific issues and should be clearer.
- 5.5.4 As written, the policy suggests that all the bullets point listed should be addressed. This is not feasible and does not reflect the different forms and scale of development which require specific consent.
- 5.5.5 I recommend that the policy is redrafted as follows;

Development should be planned and designed to encourage biodiversity. Where relevant, reflecting its scale and nature, it should enhance local wildlife species and habitats, demonstrating how they aim to achieve at least a 10% net gain for biodiversity. The following are encouraged.....;

- 5.5.6 The bullet points can then be listed out.
- 5.5.7 I note the representation from one party to the last bullet point and concur that, as drafted it is too vague. I recommend that it be re-written as follows;

Where on-site net gain for biodiversity is not appropriate then other areas will be considered, in accordance with wider government policy and the latest biodiversity metric.

- 5.5.8 I welcome the footnote referencing the Shropshire Council Site Based Ecology Report Maps.
- 5.5.9 **With the above modification and the requirement that reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, I find Policy G2 compliant.**

POLICY G3 – LOCAL CARBON REDUCTION

- 5.5.19 This policy reflects extant and emerging national policy which encourages carbon reduction. My minor recommendations are presented to remove ambiguity or confusion.
- 5.5.11 I see little need for the word 'local' at the start of the policy. The second sentence and the accompanying bullet points should be redrafted as follows;

Relevant development proposals should be supported by a statement setting out how the development will achieve this, including an indication of

- compliance with extant energy standards which should aim to exceed building standards.***

• ***generation of energy on site from renewable and low carbon sources***

- 5.5.12 My concern over the inclusion of specific values within the text of a policy is that national guidance and standard change and hence the relevance of the policy can be lost. Additionally in this case, I have not been presented with the evidence or justification to enable me to accept the reference to 'exceeding building regulations by at least 19%. The reference to 'LA 4.100-4111 would be confusing to a lay reader and has not been presented with any explanation.
- 5.5.13 The reference to the installation of community renewable energy generation is well phrased and accompanied by acceptable bullet points. The same applies to the reference to the location of such facilities and the accompanying bullet points.
- 5.5.14 **With the above modifications and the requirement that reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, I find Policy G3 compliant.**

5.6 MOVEMENT AND CONNECTION

- 5.6.1 Any NP addressing the movement of people and or vehicles and the improvement of any form of highway needs to accept that in many cases, the provision of improved facilities or maintenance of existing services is beyond the remit of the NP. In many cases they lie with the Local Highway Authority, which in this case is Shropshire Council. I note that this has been acknowledged in the accompanying text to Policy T1.

POLICY T1 – LINKAGES AND CONNECTIONS

- 5.6.2 This policy reflects the strength of local sentiment indicated in the accompanying text and the nature of the NP area where there is a clear reliance on private vehicles. The goal, however, is to move to better access to public transport and the easier use of cycles and encouragement to walk.
- 5.6.3 I find the policy clear in its approach. However, **I recommend that the opening sentence is modified very marginally and the setting out of the policy is made clearer to emphasise the three areas covered;**

Development proposals that support the enhancement and improvement of existing public rights of way, including the Shropshire Union Canal towpath, will be supported where appropriate.

All new planning applications for relevant development should demonstrate safe and accessible routes for pedestrians and cyclists to local services, facilities and existing transport networks, particularly where they link with public transport.

The addition of pavements or any other measures serving the same function should be in keeping with the rural nature of the Three Parishes and their local character.

- 5.6.4 **With the above minor modification and the requirement that reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, I find Policy T1 compliant.**

POLICY T2 – PARKING

- 5.6.5 This is an appropriate policy that was clearly an issue for the local community. I find the approach taken and the phrasing of the policy acceptable and the justification text clear.

- 5.6.6 My only concern is the reference in the last line of the policy to the Shropshire Local Plan, which as noted elsewhere is yet to be adopted.

- 5.6.7 **I suggest that that this reference is omitted, and the sentence simply reads as follows;**

Opportunities, where possible, to provide electric charging facilities for both commercial and domestic development will be supported.

- 5.6.8 **With this modification and the requirement that reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, I find Policy T2 compliant.**

POLICY T3 – BROADBAND CONNECTING THE PARISHES

- 5.6.9 This policy again reflects the findings of the community consultations and highlights the rural nature of the NP area and the need for such areas to benefit as quickly as possible from new technology.

- 5.6.10 My very minor concern lies with the last bullet point and the onus on any development to 'ensure' that Superfast Broadband is available at the point of occupation of new development. **This simply might not be feasible and hence I suggest this bullet point is modified as follows;**

Measures taken by the applicants to work with relevant providers to enable Superfast Broadband is made available at the point of occupation or as soon as possible thereafter.

- 5.6.11 **With the above modification and the requirement that reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, I find Policy T3 compliant.**

5.7 BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

- 5.7.1 The opening text of this section is clear and relevant. While I accept it is a matter of style, the inclusion of the Norton in Hales Conservation Area would be better if inserted as part of the main document as opposed to attached as an Appendix.
- 5.7.2 **I accept that the addition of Appendix 3 within the main text would be cumbersome, but I do recommend that cross reference is made to Appendix 3, in the opening text on page 41.**

POLICY LE1 – CONSERVATION OF THE THREE PARISHES HISTORIC CHARACTER

- 5.7.3 The policy is straightforward and reflects local responses as the NP was developed and much, if not all, of local and national policy. I accept that there is an element of local distinctiveness reflected in the policy and hence consider it to be an appropriate approach to reflect the wider vision and objectives of the NP.
- 5.7.4 **My minor concern lies with the last bullet point. This appears to replicate Policy G4 and should be amended to simply highlight the need to;**

‘Retain the historic sandstone boundary walls.’
- 5.7.5 **With the above modification and the requirement that reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, and the correction of NPP5 to NPPF, I find Policy LE1 compliant.**

5.8 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 5.8.1 This section again reflects the views from stakeholders and is an appropriate objective which highlights the importance of local facilities in predominantly rural areas.

POLICY COM1 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 5.8.2 The second and third sentences of this policy seem to be definitive in the first instance but then suggest exceptions and the bullet points are confusing. While I understand the approach, I feel this is cumbersome and from the second sentence the policy should be redrafted as follows;

The proposed re-use of local community facilities by other forms of community use will be strongly encouraged.

Any proposal that would result in the loss of community amenities will not be supported unless it satisfies the following criteria;

- ***The proposed use will provide equal or greater benefits to the community,***
- ***Any replacement facilities are built on sites which are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and have adequate car parking.***

Proposals for new community facilities, in appropriate locations, will be supported if the development contributes to the health and wellbeing of the public.

- 5.8.3 **There is no need for the 3rd bullet point as it is covered by the first.**
- 5.8.4 The accompanying text helpfully refers to the community's response through the consultation period. From the summary of responses presented in the NP, I am not entirely convinced that the policy addresses all the matters that were highlighted as being of importance, but the approach taken in the policy is at the discretion of the QB. As I have not been presented with the full extent of the survey questions or responses, I am not able to comment further on this.
- 5.8.5 Finally, I have some concern over the reference in the concluding accompanying paragraph on page 44 which suggests that given current permitted development rights and the opportunity to change the use of some property with a nominal submission to a LPA, and no need for a formal application, protective policies should be adopted. **Only through the designation of an Article 4 Directive can permitted development rights be overridden. A policy indicating protection of community facilities will not in itself over-ride permitted development rights. I consider that this reference is corrected.**
- 5.8.6 **With the above modification and the requirement that reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, I find Policy COM1 compliant.**

6.0 PLAN DELIVERY, IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 6.1 Reference is made in the NP to the monitoring and future review of the Plan at page 45. I find this one of the best approaches to monitoring and review I have come across and would suggest it is adopted by other QBs as best practice.
- 6.2 Hence, I find the approach taken by the QB and the commitment to future reviews of the NP to be **in accordance with current guidance and endorsed**.

7.0 REFERENDUM

- 7.1 Further to my comments and the proposed modification above, I am required to consider whether any Referendum Area, should a referendum take place, reflect the approved Neighbourhood Area or whether it should extend beyond this, in any way.
- 7.2 As noted earlier, the Neighbourhood Area reflects the greater proportion of the parishes of Adderley, Norton in Hales and Moreton Say. **I am content that this defined NP area should also reflect the area for any forthcoming Referendum.**

8.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 I find that the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan is generally clear, and the vision and objective well reflected by the series of proposed policies.
- 8.2 I have commented earlier on the more recent edition of the NPPF. I consider that an appropriate reference to this at the beginning of the NP and in the BCS would suffice.
- 8.3 Alternatively, the QB may prefer to re-issue the Statement of Basic Conditions and amend any outdated references to specific NPPF paragraphs. **I would be happy with either approach.**
- 8.4 I accept that the Plan has been the subject of consultation, and the resulting vision, objectives and ensuing policies reflect the findings of those consultations. However, my concern lies with the lack of visibility of the technical information, data, or any of the surveys and assessments undertaken. While summaries have been included in the justification sections for some policies, a far more comprehensive presentation of the supporting information needs to be made, preferably online.
- 8.5 This would have assisted me in my formal examination and any party wishing to comment through the Regulation 14 and 16 stages of the proceedings.

- 8.6 I accept that drafts of the NP have been the subject of appropriate amendments, which have taken on board relevant comments from statutory consultees and key stakeholders.
- 8.7 In some places I find the text repetitive of extant adopted policies, but I accept that this reinforces the key issues of importance to the local community and consider that these policies can remain as they are accompanied by supporting text which for some policies refers to a relevant evidence base.
- 8.8 I repeat my comments from the start of my report and confirm that I have reviewed the objections raised during the Regulation 14 and 16 stages of the NP preparation but do not feel that the issues raised present sufficient weight to require deletion or further modification of policies, over and above those suggested within this report.
- 8.9 In summary, providing additional reference is added with respect to extant Core Strategy policies, which from my review of the Core Strategy I consider do exist, the Plan complies with the legal requirements set out in Paragraph 8(1) and 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the relevant regulations relating to the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 8.10 I do not have any concerns over the defined Plan Area nor with that area forming the basis for any Referendum should the LPA and QB wish to proceed.
- 8.11 **In summary**, given my comments within this report and the progressed stage of the emerging Local Plan, the QB may be minded to place the pursuit of the Three Parishes NP on hold until the Local Plan is fully adopted. This is, of course, at the discretion of the QB. Should it decide to progress matters, **I advise that only further to the proposed modifications and my recommendations highlighted throughout this report, should the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan proceed to a Referendum.**

Louise Brooke-Smith, OBE, FRICS, MRTPI - April 2024

Appendix A - Documents reviewed by the Examiner.

- National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) (2018) and subject to clarification in 2019 and revisions in July 2021, September 2023 and December 2023.
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
- The Localism Act (2011)
- The Neighbourhood Development Planning (General) Regulations (2012) and additions
- The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and associated guidance and regulations.
- Draft Version of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan and Reg 14 submissions
- Submission Version of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan and Reg 16 submissions
- Documents identified in the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan pages of the LPA and Parish Council Websites, including the Basic Conditions Statement, Consultation Statement, and related evidence base.
- Shropshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (adopted in 2011) and SAMDev (adopted in 2015)
- The emerging Shropshire Local Plan 2016 to 2038

Appendix B – Examiner's use of Abbreviations

- Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan; NP / TPNDP
- The Plan / The Neighbourhood Plan; NP
- Parish Council; PC
- Qualifying Body; QB
- Shropshire Council; SC/Council
- Local Planning Authority; LPA
- National Planning Policy Framework; NPPF
- National Planning Practice Guidance; NPPG
- Basic Conditions Statement; BCS

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Reference	Section	Necessary Modification	Optional Modification	Agreed (Y/N)
OM1	Throughout		<p>1.3.4 ...National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) was issued in 2012 and most recently revised in December 2023. Prior to this the NPPF was revised in 2018, 2019, 2021 and September 2023. However, technically, the leading document for the purposes of this Examination is the latest 2023 version published in December 2023.</p> <p>This most recent version of the NPPF presents changes to the requirements of providing land for future housing needs. The policy relating to Neighbourhood Plans remains in place as does the overall approach endorsing sustainable development.</p> <p>I understand that the submission version of the NP was prepared reflecting the 2021 version of the NPPF.</p> <p>The QB / LPA has the option to note at the beginning of the NP / Basic Conditions Statement that salient NPPF paragraph references are to the 2021 version of that document – or – undertake a review and update any changed paragraph references to the December 2023 version of the NPPF.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan updated to confirm the NPPF paragraphs relate to the 2021 version.</p>

			I am content to leave this to the discretion of the QB/LPA providing the user of the NP is left in no doubt or confusion as to the NPPF version referenced in the explanatory text through the NP document.	
M1	Front cover	<p>3.6 Any Neighbourhood Development Plan must specify the period during which it is to have effect. The Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any date on its front cover and moreover there is inconsistency as to the exact period to which it pertains. The Consultation Statement refers in its text to the period up to 2031 while the Basic Conditions Statement refers to the period of 2016 to 2038.</p> <p>3.7 This matter needs to be far clearer, and a date indicated on the front cover of the NP document.</p> <p>3.8 A pragmatic date would be 2023-2038, to reflect the emerging local plan.</p>		Y
M2	Basic Conditions Statement	4.1.1 I have reviewed the Basic Conditions Statement (BCS) (March 2023) and find it to be a relatively clear document, notwithstanding the		Y

		<p>lack of paragraph numbers which make referencing difficult. The BCS states that the NP covers the period from 2023 to 2038. This conflicts with the end date of 2031 as noted in the Consultation Statement.</p> <p>4.1.2 This matter needs to be addressed and a clear date indicated on the front cover of the NP, and consistently referenced in all accompanying documents.</p>		
M3	Basic Conditions Statement	<p>4.1.6 I set out below my observations on the Development Plan Strategic Policies but note that the BCS acknowledged in advance of Table 4 that the LPA is currently preparing a revised local plan for the period 2016 to 2038. This is progressing through its own examination.</p> <p>4.1.7 I note the approach taken by the QB that its NP should reflect the emerging local plan and its relevant strategic policies. Accordingly, Table 4 sets out the emerging Core Strategies and how these are complemented by the proposed policies within the NP.</p> <p>4.1.8 However, while the progress made by the Local Plan review means that it carries weight in the decision-</p>		<p>Y</p> <p>A table which demonstrates conformity of the Neighbourhood Plan policies with the adopted Development Plan (Core Strategy and Site and Allocation of Development (SAMDev) Plan forms Appendix 3 of the Cabinet Papers.</p>

		<p>making process, it has yet to be formally adopted. Hence, the extant Core Strategic policies remain those adopted in 2011 and running to 2026.</p> <p>4.1.9 My concern is that although the LPA has confirmed in its Reg 16 submission that the NP policies accord with and reflect the extant Core Strategy policies, no reference to this is included within the BCS. I accept that the emerging Development Plan carries weight given its progress through an Examination in Public (EiP) and Inspectors' interim findings. However, modifications have already been suggested by the Inspectors, e.g. the deletion of Policy SP4 and other modifications may be proposed once the examination has concluded.</p> <p>4.1.10 <u>The BCS currently refers to policy SP4 and cites it in support of a number of proposed NP policies. This will need amending.</u></p> <p>4.1.11 I am of the opinion that the extant Development Plan is still a valid document. As such, and having reviewed the extant strategic policies, I consider that salient extant Core Strategy policies should be set out in</p>		
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		<p>the BCS and cross referenced to specific NP policies.</p> <p>4.1.12 It would therefore be important for a table to be included within the BCS to indicate how the proposed NP policies comply with the extant Core Strategy policies.</p> <p>4.4.4 Table 4 of the BCS explains how the proposed NP policies are in general conformity with emerging strategic policies and highlights specific policies from the emerging Local Plan. I find this to be helpful and pragmatic but not in accordance with current NPPG.</p> <p>4.4.5 Hence, as noted earlier, I advise that a further table needs to be prepared that confirms that the proposed policies find that, subject to modifications detailed later in this report, the NP policies are in general conformity with the relevant strategic policies of the extant Core Strategy policies found within the Development Plan.</p>		
OM2	Throughout		5.1.5 The absence of paragraphs throughout the Plan is a matter of style. However, it makes any reference by a decision maker or user of the document	<p>N</p> <p>The document is split into clear sections and the individual policies are clearly set out and identifiable. It is not considered necessary to</p>

			difficult. <u>This in itself does not make the Plan non-compliant, but I would urge any redrafting or future review of the document to bear this in mind.</u>	number the paragraphs at this stage and is proposed to be left as a matter for a future review of the document.
M4	Consultation Statement/ Basic Conditions Statement	5.1.6 The lack of a date on the front cover is not helpful. This should be addressed for clarity and avoid ambiguity, and the references to the NP period brought into consistency in the Consultation Statement and the BCS.		Y
M5	<i>Initial pages</i>	5.1.7 Should the NP move forward to a referendum; the initial pages of the document should be amended to reflect the stage reached. The 'Stage' section on page 4 would need to be redrafted and the 'How to comment' section on page 5 should be deleted.		Y
M6	Figure 1	5.1.8 The geographical context of the NP area is well set out on pages 6 and 7. However, Figure 1 needs to be properly titled (Shropshire Union Canal) and referenced in the text at the bottom of page 6.		Y
OM3	Figure 2		5.1.9 Figure 2 repeats the map at Appendix 1. Both are difficult to read in hard copy. <u>If they can be reproduced in a more</u>	N A hard copy version of the map can be made available on individual request.

			<u>definitive manner this would assist any reader.</u>	
OM4	Page 7		<u>5.1.10 The reference at the bottom of page 7 to flood risk would be helpfully supported by the addition of an extract from the Environment Agency flood risk map for the area in question.</u>	Partially agree A link to the Environment Agency flood risk map is provided.
OM5	Figure 3		<u>5.1.11 The context of the three parishes is helpfully presented, as is the very general overview of housing provision and heritage properties. However, Figure 3 is presented at a very difficult scale to read in hard copy. While I accept that on screen this figure can be expanded, it would assist any reader if the sites marked were listed out clearly. Cross reference to Appendix 3 would also assist any reader.</u>	N It is not considered appropriate for this level of detail in a development plan
OM6	Page 9		<u>5.1.12 Reference to the 2011 census is outdated given that the 2021 data has been in the public domain for some time. Consideration should be given to making reference to the most up to date census information.</u>	N The 2021 Census data currently available is more generic and does not contain the same detailed Parish level data which the 2011 Census provides. It is therefore proposed to keep the referenced data from the 2011 Census.
M7	Page 13	5.1.13 Landscape and Natural Environment comments from page 13 refers in the first paragraph to the 'Shropshire Landscape Assessment'. However, it is unclear when this was published and who by. This should		Y The areas identified are extracts from Shropshire Landscape Typology Assessment, 2006, Shropshire County Council. A link has been provided to the Assessment and the interactive map to identify the areas.

		be clarified, and it would assist any reader if the various areas identified on page 13 are illustrated on the map showing the extent of the NP area.		
OM7	Figure 11		5.1.14 <u>Figure 11 presents generic views of different land classification and again this would have more relevance if the locations of the various views were included.</u>	N To avoid confusion the title to figure 11 has been amended to make it clear the photographs are extracts from the Shropshire Landscape Typology Assessment.
OM8	Page 15		5.1.15 <u>Page 15 presents an explanation of the context for preparing the NP. However, this repeats information contained within the BCS, and consultation statement and I consider it to be superfluous for the submission version of the NP. Should the NP proceed to referendum I would advise that it is deleted and / or included within an updated Consultation Statement.</u>	Y
M8	Page 16 & 17	5.1.16 Pages 16 and 17 contain text which explains the national and local planning policy. I have commented earlier in this report as to the need to be far clearer as to the version of the NPPF used in preparing the NP. I have assumed that the QB have used the version issued in 2021. This needs to be clearly explained.		Y

M9	Page 19	5.1.27 The overview of what the survey covered indicates it to be very relevant to the preparation of the NP. I recommend that for transparency, full details of the questions and responses received need to be in the public domain as they have clearly guided the vision and subsequent policies of the NP. Without that transparency, the rationale for some policies has been difficult to understand.		Y
M10	Page 20	5.1.28 Reference is made to 'technical evidence' on page 20. I note that some information is available on the Three Parishes Plan website. However, full details of this evidence have not been presented to me. A list of documents or data used to support the preparation of the NP's vision and subsequent policies would have been helpful to my examination and I consider it would be important to any user of the Plan.		Y
M11	Policy H1 – HOUSING DESIGN	Include references to extant Core Strategy policies.		Y
M12	Policy H2 – HOUSING MIX AND TENURE	5.3.8 My concern is that the policy makes specific reference to the emerging Local Plan policy. This has not been formally adopted and hence		Y

		<p>there remains the potential for it to be amended or challenged. While I accept that given the progress of the emerging Local Plan, this is unlikely, it would be more appropriate to omit the last sentence of the policy.</p> <p>5.3.9 While reference to emerging policies can be made in the accompanying text, this should also refer to extant Core Strategy policy that relates to housing mix.</p>		
	Policy EMP1 – SMALL SCALE EMPLOYMENT	<p>5.4.3 This policy uses the words ‘suitable’ and ‘appropriate’ in its first sentence. These can be misleading to any user. Some promoters of development might find their proposals suitable and appropriate, but the decision makers may take a different view. This isn’t helpful.</p> <p>5.4.4 Given the following two areas of acceptable forms of development, the first sentence should simply read as follows;</p> <p><i>Development proposals that provide employment opportunities will be encouraged in the following circumstances.....</i></p>		Y

		5.4.5 The remaining text can be retained without change. As for all other policies, reference should be made to extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section.		
M14	Policy EMP2 – FARM DIVERSIFICATION	<p>5.4.7 This policy specifically addresses farm diversification and is pertinent given the nature of the NP area. However, given the accompanying text explaining the evidence and justification for this policy, I have concerns that bullet one is unnecessarily restrictive and doesn't accord with either the emerging or extant Core Strategy policies. If the QB only wants to indicate compliance with emerging local policies, then I find this bullet point fails the test and should be deleted.</p> <p>The last bullet point would suffice in addressing the responses from the local consultation exercise which is summarised in the accompanying text.</p> <p>5.4.8 Many of the bullet points, and specifically the 5th bullet point duplicates Policy EMP1 but I accept that this presents an acceptable element of emphasis.</p>		Y

		5.4.9 reference should be made to extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section.		
M15	Policy G1 – PROTECTING OPEN SPACES IN THE THREE PARISHES	5.5.2 With the requirement that reference should be made to the relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, I find Policy G1 compliant without further modification.		Y
M16	Policy G2 – PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY	<p>5.5.3 The overall approach of this policy is understood but the initial paragraph appears to mix two specific issues and should be clearer.</p> <p>5.5.4 As written, the policy suggests that all the bullets point listed should be addressed. This is not feasible and does not reflect the different forms and scale of development which require specific consent.</p> <p>5.5.5 I recommend that the policy is redrafted as follows;</p> <p><i>Development should be planned and designed to encourage biodiversity. Where relevant, reflecting its scale and nature, it should enhance local wildlife species and habitats, demonstrating how they aim to achieve at least a 10% net gain for</i></p>		Y

		<p><i>biodiversity. The following are encouraged.....;</i></p> <p>5.5.6 The bullet points can then be listed out</p>		
M17	Policy G2 – PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY	<p>5.5.7 I note the representation from one party to the last bullet point and concur that, as drafted it is too vague. I recommend that it be re-written as follows;</p> <p><i>Where on-site net gain for biodiversity is not appropriate then other areas will be considered, in accordance with wider government policy and the latest biodiversity metric.</i></p> <p>5.5.9 reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section.</p>		Y
M18	Policy G3 – LOCAL CARBON REDUCTION	<p>5.5.11 I see little need for the word 'local' at the start of the policy. The second sentence and the accompanying bullet points should be redrafted as follows;</p> <p><i>Relevant development proposals should be supported by a statement</i></p>		Y

		<p><i>setting out how the development will achieve this, including an indication of</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>compliance with extant energy standards which should aim to exceed building standards.</i> • <i>generation of energy on site from renewable and low carbon sources</i> 		
M19	Policy G3 – LOCAL CARBON REDUCTION	5.5.14 Reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section		Y
M20	Policy T1 – LINKAGES AND CONNECTIONS	<p>5.6.3 I find the policy clear in its approach. However, I recommend that the opening sentence is modified very marginally and the setting out of the policy is made clearer to emphasise the three areas covered;</p> <p><i>Development proposals that support the enhancement and improvement of existing public rights of way, including the Shropshire Union Canal towpath, will be supported where appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>All new planning applications for relevant development should demonstrate safe and accessible</i></p>		Y

		<p><i>routes for pedestrians and cyclists to local services, facilities and existing transport networks, particularly where they link with public transport.</i></p> <p><i>The addition of pavements or any other measures serving the same function should be in keeping with the rural nature of the Three Parishes and their local character.</i></p> <p>5.6.4 reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section.</p>		
M21	Policy T2 – PARKING	<p>5.6.6 My only concern is the reference in the last line of the policy to the Shropshire Local Plan, which as noted elsewhere is yet to be adopted.</p> <p>5.6.7 I suggest that that this reference is omitted, and the sentence simply reads as follows;</p> <p><i>Opportunities, where possible, to provide electric charging facilities for both commercial and domestic development will be supported.</i></p> <p>5.6.8 reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy</p>		Y

		policy at the end of the justification section.		
M22	Policy T3 – BROADBAND CONNECTING THE PARISHES	<p>5.6.10 My very minor concern lies with the last bullet point and the onus on any development to ‘ensure’ that Superfast Broadband is available at the point of occupation of new development. This simply might not be feasible and hence I suggest this bullet point is modified as follows;</p> <p><i>Measures taken by the applicants to work with relevant providers to enable Superfast Broadband is made available at the point of occupation or as soon as possible thereafter.</i></p> <p>5.6.11 reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section</p>		Y
OM09	BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE		<p>5.7.1 The opening text of this section is clear and relevant. While I accept it is a matter of style, the inclusion of the Norton in Hales Conservation Area would be better if inserted as part of the main document as opposed to attached as an Appendix.</p>	<p>Partially Agree</p> <p>Appendix 4 is already cross referenced within the text and demonstrates the extent of the Norton In Hales Conservation Area it is not considered necessary to include the map at this point. Appendix 3 which the examiner refers to relates to the listed buildings in the Area, this has been cross referenced in the text of this section.</p>

			5.7.2 I accept that the addition of Appendix 3 within the main text would be cumbersome, but I do recommend that cross reference is made to Appendix 3, in the opening text on page 41.	
M23	Policy LE1 – CONSERVATION OF THE THREE PARISHES HISTORIC CHARACTER	5.7.4 My minor concern lies with the last bullet point. This appears to replicate Policy G4 and should be amended to simply highlight the need to; <i>‘Retain the historic sandstone boundary walls.’</i>		Y
M24	Policy LE1 – CONSERVATION OF THE THREE PARISHES HISTORIC CHARACTER	5.7.5 reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, and the correction of NPP5 to NPPF.		Y
M25	Policy COM1 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES	5.8.2 The second and third sentences of this policy seem to be definitive in the first instance but then suggest exceptions and the bullet points are confusing. While I understand the approach, I feel this is cumbersome and from the second sentence the policy should be redrafted as follows; The proposed re-use of local community facilities by other forms		Y

		<p>of community use will be strongly encouraged.</p> <p>Any proposal that would result in the loss of community amenities will not be supported unless it satisfies the following criteria;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed use will provide equal or greater benefits to the community, • Any replacement facilities are built on sites which are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and have adequate car parking. <p>Proposals for new community facilities, in appropriate locations, will be supported if the development contributes to the health and wellbeing of the public.</p> <p>5.8.3 There is no need for the 3rd bullet point as it is covered by the first.</p>		
M26	Policy COM1 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES	5.8.5 Finally, I have some concern over the reference in the concluding accompanying paragraph on page 44 which suggests that given current permitted development rights and		Y

		<p>the opportunity to change the use of some property with a nominal submission to a LPA, and no need for a formal application, protective policies should be adopted. Only through the designation of an Article 4 Directive can permitted development rights be overridden. A policy indicating protection of community facilities will not in itself over-ride permitted development rights. I consider that this reference is corrected.</p> <p>5.8.6 With the above modification and the requirement that reference should be made to relevant extant Core Strategy policy at the end of the justification section, I find Policy COM1 compliant.</p>		
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APPENDIX 3

Conformity of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan with the Adopted Shropshire Development Plan (Core Strategy and Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev)

Shropshire Development Plan - Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan Policies	Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Policies
CS5: Countryside and Green Belt	EMP2: This policy promotes small scale economic development through farm diversification.
CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles	<p>H1: seeks to ensure that the design of housing development is of a sustainable design, compliments the local area and protects residential amenity.</p> <p>EMP1 and EMP2: These policies promoting employment development which protects residential amenity and the characteristics of the local area.</p> <p>G1: seeks to protect public open spaces.</p> <p>G3: seeks to encourage development with zero carbon emissions and supports community renewable energy schemes.</p> <p>T2: Seeks to protect existing car parking facilities and encourages new development to provide adequate car parking.</p> <p>LE1: Seeks to preserve and enhance the Three Parishes historic character, including Norton In Hales Conservation Area.</p> <p>COM1: Seeks to protect and prevent the loss of existing facilities used by the local community.</p>
CS7: Communications and Transport	<p>T1: Encouraging development to provide safe cycle and pedestrian paths to link up to local services and existing transport networks.</p> <p>T3: Promotes the installation of super-fast broadband connections throughout the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan Area.</p>
CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision	COM1: Seeks to protect and prevent the loss of existing facilities used by the local community.
CS11: Type and Affordability of Housing	H2: requires development to meet local housing need with a mix of types, sizes and

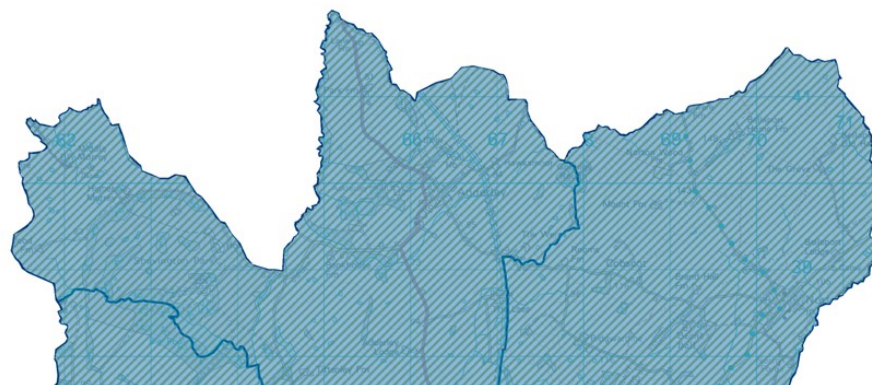
	tenures.
CS13: Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment	<p>EMP1: Promoting rural employment within the parish through conversion of existing building and new build development in suitable locations.</p> <p>EMP2: Seeking to support a sustainable rural economy through farm diversification schemes.</p>
CS16: Tourism, Culture and Leisure	T1: Seeks to protect and improve the existing local rights of way network, including the Shropshire Union Canal towpath.
CS17: Environmental Networks	<p>H1: The policy promotes features to enhance and protect wildlife and biodiversity.</p> <p>EMP1 and EMP2: These policies seek to promote appropriate employment development which protects the historic environment.</p> <p>G1: seeks to protect public open spaces.</p> <p>G2: Seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity within the Three Parishes.</p> <p>LE1: Seeks to preserve and enhance the Three Parishes historic character, including Norton In Hales Conservation Area.</p>
MD2: Sustainable Design	<p>H1: seeks to ensure that the design of housing development is of a sustainable design, compliments the local area and protects residential amenity.</p> <p>EMP1 and EMP2: These policies seek to encourage sustainable employment development which protects residential amenity and the characteristics of the local area.</p> <p>G1: seeks to protect public open spaces.</p>
MD8: Infrastructure Provision	G3: seeks to encourage development with zero carbon emissions and supports community renewable energy schemes.
MD9: Protecting Employment Areas	EMP1: Seeks to protect existing employment areas from non-employment uses requiring viability assessment and demonstration of the alternative uses benefits to the local community.
MD12: Natural Environmental	H1: Seeks to encourage use of features

	<p>within design which enhances and protects wildlife and biodiversity of the area.</p> <p>EMP1 and EMP2: These policies seek to ensure new employment development protect the local natural environment.</p> <p>G2: Seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity within the Three Parishes.</p>
MD13: The Historic Environment	<p>EMP1 and EMP2: Seeks to ensure any conversions to create employment development protect the local historic environment.</p> <p>LE1: Seeks to preserve and enhance the Three Parishes historic character, including Norton In Hales Conservation Area.</p>

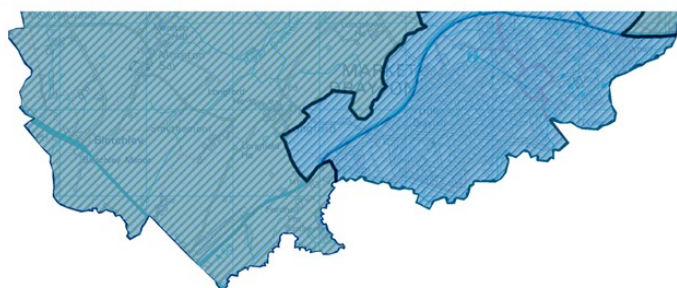
The above table demonstrates that the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development is in conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan for Shropshire (adopted Core Strategy 2011, and adopted Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev) 2015.

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The Three Parishes of Adderley, Norton in Hales and Moreton Say



THE THREE PARISHES PLAN **WORKING FOR THE COMMUNITY**



2023-2038

For Referendum

Foreword

In January of 2019 the neighbouring Parishes of Norton In Hales, Adderley and Moreton Say decided to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan. For three Parishes to collaborate on a plan of such importance is a huge undertaking and it has only been possible with the support of members of the community and the parish councillors together with Shropshire Council representatives and officers. Thanks must also go to those members of the community who have attended consultation days and public meetings and have taken the time to fill in questionnaires and return them for consideration in the creation of this document.

In beginning the Neighbourhood Plan process we could not have anticipated the onset of a global pandemic. The impact of the pandemic has caused many long delays and has made it difficult to achieve as much as we would have liked. Nevertheless we have held consultation meetings in each of the three parishes. In addition every household in the three parishes has received a housing needs consultation document the response to which we have supplemented with an independent housing needs assessment. Issues which were raised during this process which could not have been addressed by the developing plan were referred through parish councils to the appropriate bodies. We have kept people informed throughout this process by reporting back at parish meetings and parish council meetings. In addition the Neighbourhood Plan website, <https://threeparishplan.org/> has been regularly updated with short bulletins and has copies of the notes from each meeting.

The three parishes share common issues around development. They lie between the local market town of Market Drayton and the neighbouring counties of Cheshire and Staffordshire. Each of the neighbouring authorities have their own ambitions for development and so there was a shared desire on the part of the three parishes to have their own ambitions for development enshrined in a Neighbourhood Plan rather than be subject to the influences from surrounding bodies. We want our Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the needs and the aspirations of the local communities who recognise the needs and limitations and well as the opportunities of living in rural communities faced with the challenges of access to services. We recognise that many of the issues faced by the community lie beyond the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan but there was a determination that development in the area matched the needs and aspirations of the community.

Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan

Contents	Page
1. <u>Introduction and Stages</u>	4
2. <u>Setting the Context</u>	6
• Description of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood area	6
• Housing	11
• Heritage	12
• Landscape and Natural Environment	13
3. <u>National and Local Planning Policy</u>	16
• National Planning Policy Framework	17
• Shropshire Local Plan	17
• Emerging Shropshire Local Plan	18
4. <u>Evidence Base</u>	19
• Consultations	19
• Technical Evidence	20
• SEA and HRA	20
5. <u>Vision and Objectives</u>	22
• The Vision of the Neighbourhood Plan	22
• Objectives	23
6. <u>Policies</u>	24
• Housing and Design;	24
• Employment and Business;	28
• Natural Environment;	32
• Movement and Connection;	37
• Built Environment and Heritage; and	41
• Community Facilities	43
7. <u>Monitoring and Review</u>	45
<u>Appendices</u>	
1. Neighbourhood Plan Boundary	47
2. Process of Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan	48
3. National Heritage List	50
4. Norton In Hales Conservation Area	60

1. Introduction and Stages

Introduction

The three settlements of Adderley, Norton-In-Hales and Moreton Say (alongside Bletchley, Longford, Longslow) are proposed as a 'Community Cluster' in the emerging Shropshire Local Plan. Draft policy SP9 of the draft Local Plan sets out how development will be managed in Community Cluster settlements, but in general this will consist of modest levels of appropriate development in order to maintain or enhance their sustainability.

The Three Parishes hold a responsibility for their historic and environmental heritage, and as part of this Neighbourhood Plan we are seeking to ensure the continued protection of our Neighbourhood area.

There is a shared commitment to 'future proof' the land for future diversification of industry, amenity areas and tourism; to maximise the potential of our land and capture the vitality and vibrancy of the rural areas.

The aim of this Neighbourhood Plan is to recognise the potential for economic growth in Shropshire whilst ensuring that the Three Parishes have a role in that future.

Stages

This Neighbourhood Plan has been formulated on the basis of ensuring the community gets the right types of development in the right place. In preparation for this draft of the Neighbourhood Plan early consultation was held with the public, a further consultation was then held on the Regulation 14 draft of the document and following input from consultees and the general public a Regulation 15 draft has now been prepared which will be formally submitted to Shropshire Council.

Shropshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority, then carried out one final check to ensure the plan and its accompanying information complied with the relevant legal requirements. The Local Planning Authority then placed it on their website for a final six week consultation (Regulation 16), before passing it on to an Independent Examiner who issued a report stating that the Neighbourhood Plan could proceed to a final referendum with modifications.

This Neighbourhood Plan offers a vision for the future and sets out clear objectives and policies based on previous comments received regarding the Neighbourhood Area. The policies within this Plan have been subjected to scrutiny by the statutory agencies including;

- **The Environment Agency;**
- **Natural England; and**
- **Historic England**

The policies have been assessed by the agencies through a screening exercise relating to the environmental assessments including the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). If supported through referendum, the policies will then have to be taken into account by applicants, developers and the Local Planning Authority when considering

development in the Neighbourhood Area. Thus giving much greater weight to the views of the Parish in the decision-making process.

Figure 1: Shropshire Union Canal at Adderley

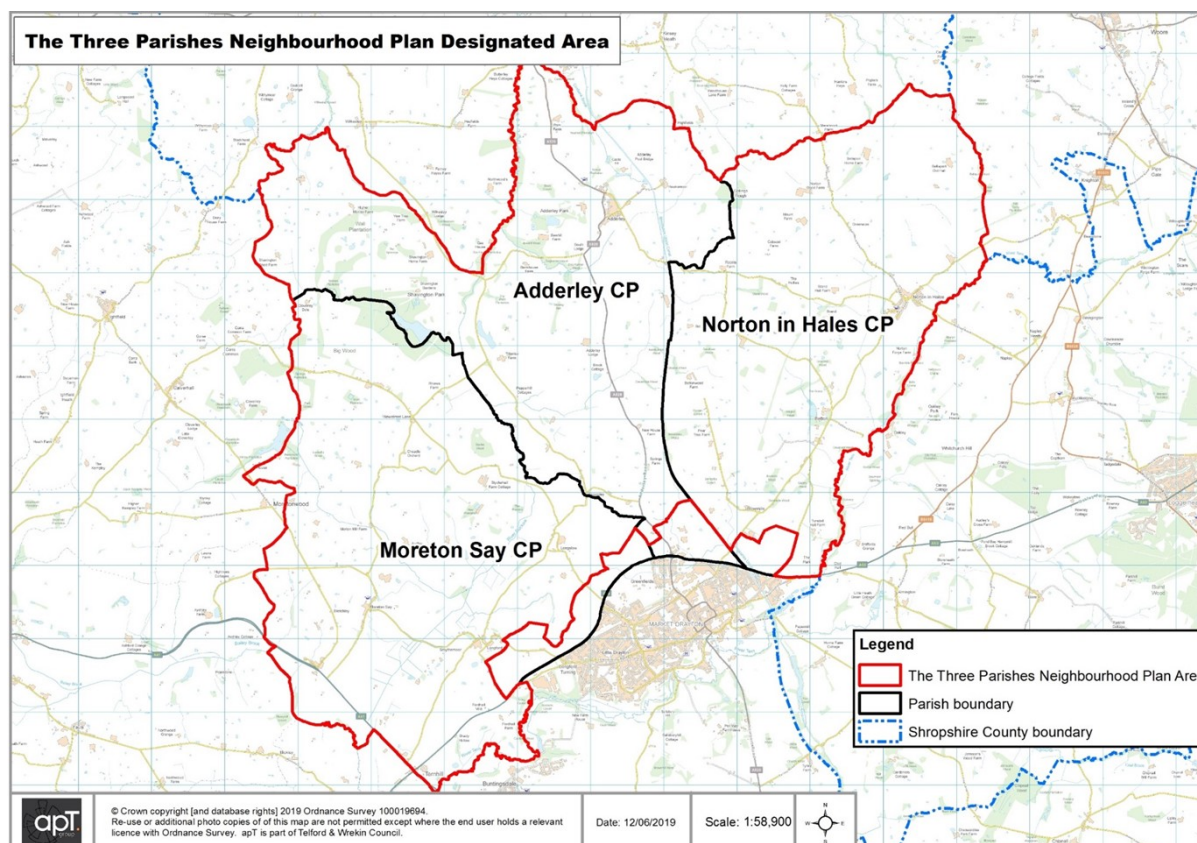


2. Setting the Context for the Three Parishes

The Three Parishes are located to the north of Market Drayton in the administrative authority of Shropshire Council. To the north is Cheshire East Council and to the east is Staffordshire Council. The Three Parishes consist of:

- Adderley;
- Norton-In-Hales; and
- Moreton Say.

Figure 2: Three Parishes Boundary



The combined area covers approximately 6,000 hectares and as of the 2011 census has a recorded population of 1,477 people, which equates to 0.25 persons per hectare.

The Shropshire Union Canal (running from Ellesmere Port on the River Mersey to Autherley Junction, near Wolverhampton, where it meets the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal) runs through the neighbourhood area in a north-south direction (Figure 1). The River Tern runs along the southern edge where it then rises north-east of Market Drayton.

The surrounding area consists of rolling lowland landscapes, characterised by agricultural land as well as a dense network of hedgerow trees and ancient woodland which are set within a background of winding lanes and irregular fields.

There are a range of local facilities and services within the Three Parishes. These key facilities and services are shown in Table 1 below.

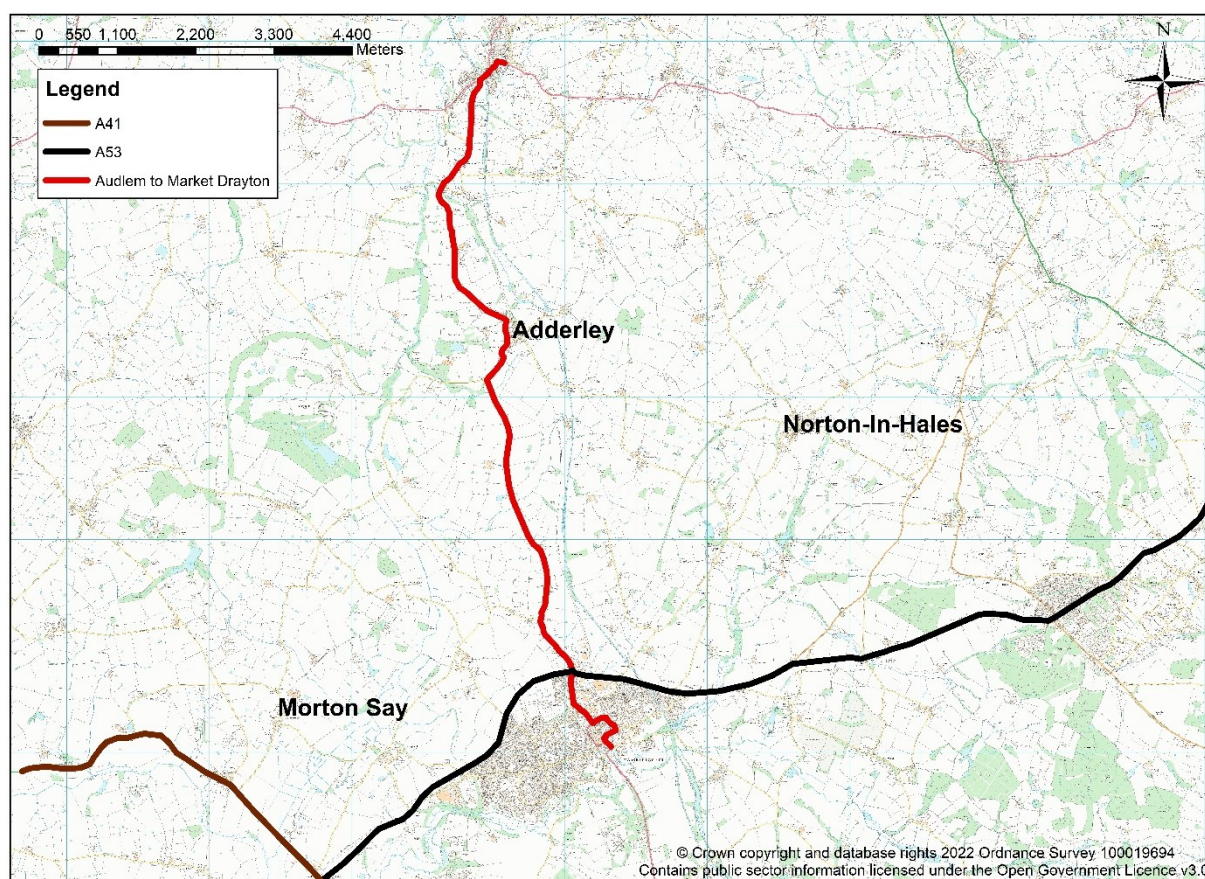
Table 1: List of Key Services and Facilities

Village Halls	Café
Pubs and Restaurants	Recreation Areas
Pre-School	Listed Churches
Primary Schools	Places of Retail

Local facilities and services are predominantly located in Adderley and Norton-In-Hales, with other key facilities including an on-demand bus service with concessionary travel (within Norton-In-Hales) available to residents, which is typically used by those over 60 or with an eligible disability.

Throughout the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Area the main access and transport routes are minor rural roads that cross through villages. The A529 provides a key north-south transport route between Audlem and Market Drayton and local routes also connect with the A53 and A41 which runs through the south-west of Moreton Say.

Figure 3: Main Transport Routes



In terms of flood risk most of the area is located outside of any flood risk zones. However, where the Rivers Duckow and Tern cross through the area, their river lengths are in flood zone 3 (<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>) meaning that the land around the rivers has a high probability of flooding.

Adderley

Adderley is a rural parish in Shropshire, located north of Market Drayton between the town and Cheshire East county boundary. Adderley village is the principal settlement in the neighbourhood area. During the 2011 census Adderley Parish had a population of 372 residents and covered a geographic area of 1,965.3 hectares, giving a population density of approximately 0.2 persons per hectare.

From the 2011 census, the age profile for Adderley is slightly younger than the Shropshire average but similar to the Three Parishes overall. The presence of a primary school and nursery in Adderley provides an opportunity for educating early year's children. Given there is notable difference between the age profile for primary school age residents compared with the Three Parishes and county averages, the primary school caters to a wider catchment area beyond the parish.

Adderley has a greater proportion of working-age population at 65.9% in comparison with 62.6% and 62% for the Three Parishes as a whole and Shropshire respectively. This is a benefit to Adderley Parish in terms of having those who are contributing to the economy; however, as this population grows older, housing and lifestyle choices will influence decisions on whether to remain in the area or move elsewhere.

The key industries for residents aged 16-74 in employment can be broadly grouped into three categories. These include:

- Land-based industries such as agriculture, forestry and fishing;
- Public sector services including education, health and social care; and
- Manufacturing/trade activities.

This reflects the rural nature of the parish, and also the proximity to towns where public sector services are typically located.

The lack of public transport services and travel to work distances offer insight into the economic patterns of residents. This suggests that households are reliant on car use to travel around, especially with a lack of public transport and provision locally.

Figure 4: Adderley Church**Moreton Say****Figure 5: Aerial View of Moreton Say**

Moreton Say is a small village and sparsely populated parish in Shropshire. It is located just northwest of the town of Market Drayton. The Parish also covers the hamlets of Longford and Longslow. During the 2011 census it had a total population of 485 people and covers 2162.7 hectares providing a population density of approximately 0.2 persons per hectare.

Of the 485 residents in Moreton Say Parish, figures suggest that the population of Moreton Say skews younger than the Three Parishes and Shropshire averages. The mean age at 40.9 years is lower than

both Three Parishes (43.4) and Shropshire (42.6). This is most evident in the proportionally greater working age population (66.6%) and proportionally smaller elderly and retired populations (13.3%). The presence of Moreton Say Primary School also provides an opportunity for educating children within the Parish.

The slightly larger working age population is a key asset; however, it is recognised that challenges remain with infrastructure, particularly transport. There are no bus services in Moreton Say, meaning residents must travel by car and this is reflected in the census data for high car ownership compared with the Three Parishes and Shropshire.

While the proportion of home workers in Moreton Say is greater than other categories of travel to work (likely to have increased due to the impacts of Covid-19 and increasing amounts of people working at home), the majority of workers still travel to work.

This pattern may be partly due to a high proportion of workers in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries, or technological improvements and changing working practices enabling greater flexibility with work patterns. Nevertheless, the main regional towns still appear to draw workers on their commute resulting in greater traffic on key commuter corridors (the A41) at peak times, further worsened by the lack of public transport.

Norton in Hales

Norton in Hales is a rural parish in the north of Shropshire Council. Woore Parish adjoins the eastern boundary of Norton in Hales; Cheshire East Council adjoins the northern boundary and Staffordshire County adjoins the southern boundary. Adderley and Market Drayton are located west and south-west of the parish respectively.

The River Tern runs along the southern boundary with Staffordshire County. The western boundary follows the Shropshire Union Canal for much of its route, adjoining Adderley parish.

The parish covers a geographic area of 1, 839.35 hectares. With 620 residents (at the 2011 census) giving a population density of approximately 0.3 persons per hectare.

Figure 6: Norton In Hales from outside St Chad's Church



The Norton in Hales age profile was slightly older in contrast to its neighbours in the Three Parishes. Overall the mean and median ages were older (45.6 and 47) than the Three Parishes (43.4 and 46) and Shropshire (42.6 and 44). There were however variations within the age groups.

Norton in Hales has a primary school and given the greater proportion of younger school-age pupils (5 to 9) it is assumed that they attend the primary school, although the numbers overall suggest that the school has a wider catchment area beyond the parish.

The proportion of working age population was less than the Three Parishes and Shropshire averages. However, the proportion of economically active residents was broadly consistent (71.5%) with the Three Parishes (72.6%) and Shropshire (71%).

The trends in industry sectors was broadly similar to the Three Parishes overall; the main difference was that fewer parish residents working in the agriculture forestry and fish industries (11.8%) than across the Three Parishes (15.8%). This was however offset by slightly greater proportions of Norton in Hales residents working in the wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing and education industries respectively.

Housing

During the 2011 census, the majority of dwellings (houses and bungalows) across the Three Parishes were detached (61.1%) which was significantly greater than the Shropshire average (39.5%). The proportion of semi-detached dwellings for both the Three Parishes and Shropshire were at similar levels (30.1% and 33.4% respectively). Proportionally there were more terrace properties across Shropshire, reflecting the areas' rural character and dispersed nature of development.

In terms of housing tenure, the proportions of home ownership were similar for the Three Parishes (71.3%) and Shropshire (69.2%) averages, with more households owning their properties outright across the Three Parishes (41%) than Shropshire (38.6%).

Across Shropshire there were proportionally more social rented households (13.5%) than the Three Parishes (6.8%), with more private rent households (17.9%) across the Three Parishes than Shropshire (15%). Reflecting the rural nature of the neighbourhood area.

Heritage

There is one conservation area in the Three Parishes within Norton-In-Hales village. It was designated on 1st March 2007 and covers most of the built-up area of the village.

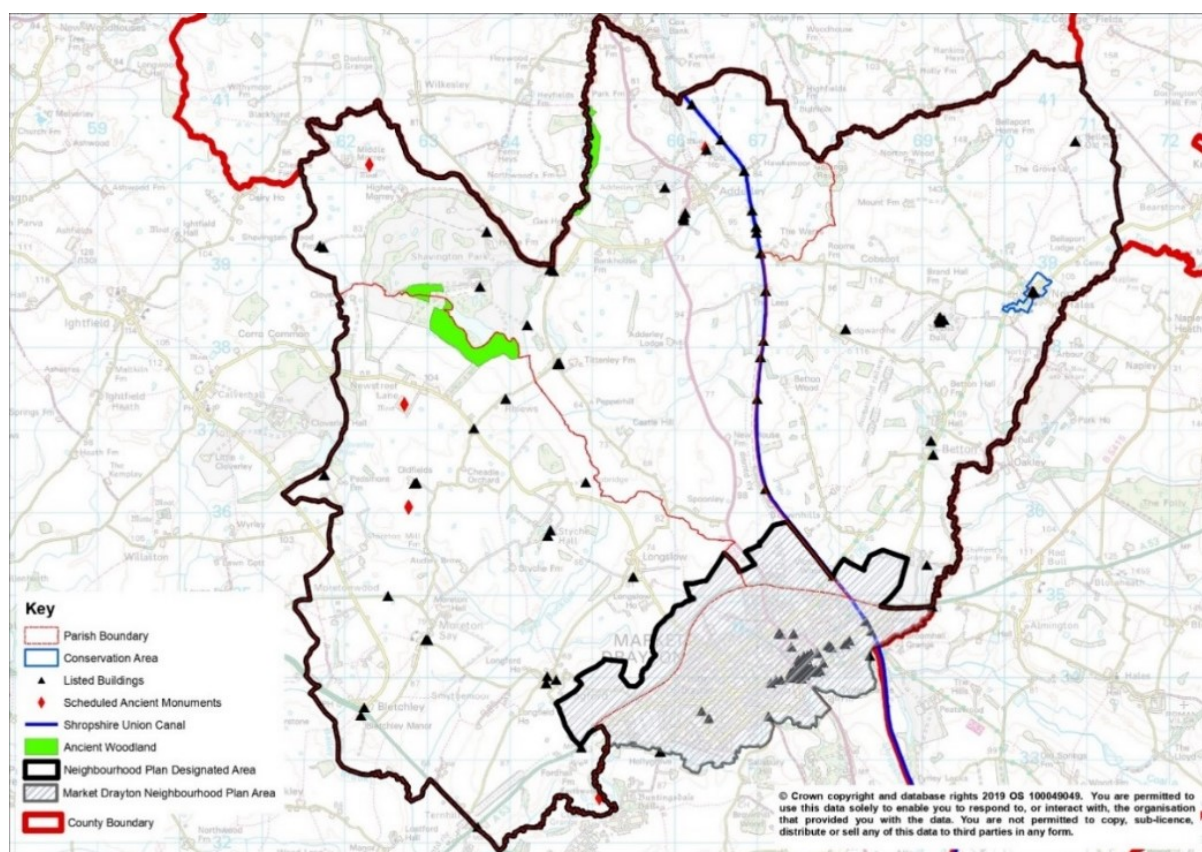
In addition, there are several grade II and II* listed buildings which are located throughout the Three Parishes. The greatest concentration of listed buildings can be found around the main villages of Adderley and Norton-In-Hales. Historic halls such as Brand Hall, is west of Norton-In-Hales; this includes the grade II* listed hall and several grade II and II* structures within the grounds of the hall.

A scheduled monument is located north of Adderley, approximately 75m North West of Pool House. The monument includes the earthwork and buried remains of a motte castle and an 18th century icehouse.

Figures 7, 8 and 9: Brand Hall Norton-In-Hales, St Peters Church, Adderley and Styche Moreton Say



Figure 10: Heritage in the Three Parishes



Landscape and Natural Environment

The Shropshire Landscape Typology Assessment provides an analysis of the county's varied landscape. It was produced in 2006 by Shropshire County, a copy of the Assessment along with an interactive version of the map can be found on Shropshire Council's webpages:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/environment/landscape/shropshire-landscape-assessment/>.

The Shropshire Landscape Typology Assessment looks at physical characteristics and cultural dimensions which together have been used to identify 27 different landscape types. The landscape types are defined by components that determine its character and this information can help determine the conditions to be set for new development. The Three Parishes Neighbourhood Area is characterised by the following areas with varying influences on the area as a whole:

- **Principal Timbered Farmlands:** This landscape type occurs throughout much of Shropshire. They are predominantly rolling lowland landscapes, with occasional steeply undulating valley sides, and are characterised by a mosaic of agricultural land. Other key characteristics include:
 - Relic ancient woodland;
 - Hedged fields with scattered hedgerow trees;
 - Dispersed settlement pattern; and
 - Small to medium scale landscapes with filtered views.
- **Timbered Pastures:** Occurring only in the extreme north-eastern corner of Shropshire, this is a lowland landscape of rolling glacial tills, where the heavy overlying soils support medium intensity dairy farming. Other key characteristics include:
 - Dense network of trees;
 - Ancient woodland character, pastoral land use; and
 - Small-medium scale landscape with filtered views.
- **Estate Farmlands:** Estate farmlands are gently rolling lowland and valley floor landscapes that occur across large areas of Shropshire. The lower ground is usually underlain by softer, more easily eroded rocks such as shales, sometimes in sharp contrast to nearby ridges or harder rocks. Glacial drift deposits form the basis of most soils and these landscapes include some of the best agricultural land in the county, which have traditionally been associated with mixed farming. Other key characteristics include:
 - Clustered settlement pattern;
 - Large country houses with associated parklands;
 - Planned woodland character; and
 - Medium to large scale landscapes with framed views.
- **Settled Pastoral Farmlands:** Located mainly in the northern and western parts of the county, these are lowland agricultural landscapes. Heavy, often poorly drained soils are of the defining characteristics of this landscape type and have traditionally been associated with livestock farming. Other key characteristics include:
 - Pastoral land use;
 - Scattered hedgerow trees;
 - Irregular field pattern; and
 - Small to medium scale landscapes.
- **Principal Settled Farmlands:** These are prevalent throughout northern Shropshire, mainly in association with Permian and Triassic sandstones, together with the Rea Valley, the Vale of Montgomery, the northern end of Ape Dale and the areas of Ludlow and Bridgnorth. Key characteristics include:

- Mixed farming land use; and
- Varied pattern of sub-regular, hedged fields.
- **Riverside Meadows:** These are linear landscapes associated with the well-defined floodplains that border the major rivers in the county, the Severn, Vyrnwy, Tern and Teme, and their larger tributaries. Key characteristics include:
 - Flat, floodplain topography;
 - Pastoral land use;
 - Linear belts of trees along watercourses;
 - Hedge and ditch field boundaries; and
 - Unsettled.

Figure 11: Photographs identifying example Landscape Typologies, taken from the Shropshire Landscape Typology Assessment



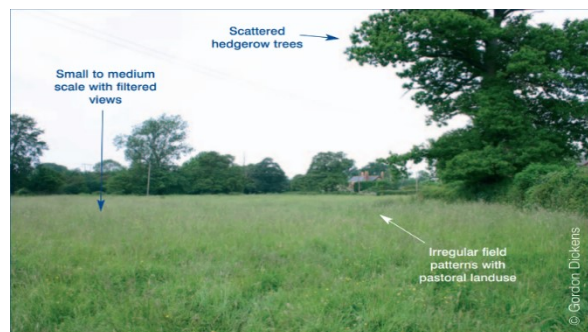
Principal Settled Farmlands



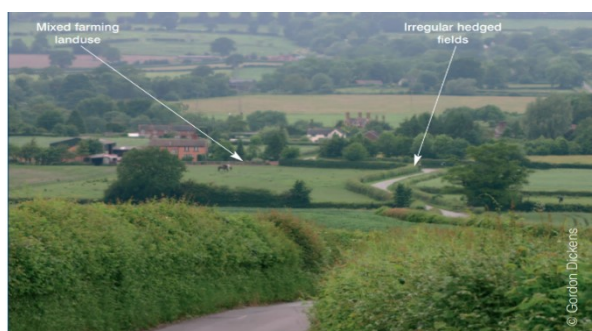
Timbered Pastures



Estate Farmlands



Settled Pastoral Farmlands



Principal Settled Farmlands



Riverside Meadows

3. National and Local Planning Policy

One of the requirements of a Neighbourhood Plan is to account for both National and Local Planning Policy. If the Plan does not comply with both it will fail the basic conditions which are required to be met. This is tested through an independent examination before the neighbourhood plan can proceed to referendum.

National Planning Policy

In terms of National Planning Policy this is mostly contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The references in this document to the NPPF refer to the 2021 version. This states that the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan should ***“support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies”*** in this case the Shropshire Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will need to ***“shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies”***.

Para 14 of the NPPF considers that ***“situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits”*** provided the following criteria apply:

- a. the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan two years or less before the date on which the decision is made;***
- b. the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement;***
- c. the local planning authority has at least a three year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five year housing supply requirement, including the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 73); and***
- d. the local planning authority’s housing delivery was at least 45% of that required over the previous three years.***

Para 21 considers that ***“Strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies”***. This means that some policies that are specific to the neighbourhood area are better placed within neighbourhood plans, this could include improvement to local transport networks or control of land within the area.

The role of Neighbourhood Plans is further expanded in Para 29 stating that ***“Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies”***.

Para 30 continues ***“Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently”***.

When considering the achievement of well-designed places para 125 states that ***“Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development”***.

Shropshire Council Policy

Shropshire Council’s strategic planning policy is contained in the adopted Shropshire Core Strategy (adopted 24th February 2011) and the Site Allocations & Management of Development (SAMDev) (adopted 17th December 2015).

Shropshire Council is currently at the examination stage of their Local Plan Review. An appropriate and sensible approach from this point is to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plan on the basis of the emerging strategy and policies and work closely with Shropshire Council during the preparation of both documents. The Three Parishes recognises that it will need to consider implications arising from the examination of the Local Plan and that they may need to pause the Neighbourhood Plan process to take these into account.

The Core Strategy sets out Shropshire Council’s vision, strategic objectives and the broad strategy to guide future development and growth in Shropshire during the period up to 2026. Shropshire’s SAMDev sets out proposals for the use of land and policies to guide future development in order to help deliver the vision and objectives of the Shropshire Core Strategy.

The purpose of the Shropshire Local Plan Review (2016-2038) is to update elements of the current Development Plan and to make sure that Shropshire can respond flexibly to changing circumstances in line with the NPPF. The Review includes consideration of housing numbers (including the objectively assessed need), employment land requirements, and the distribution of development and review of Green Belt boundaries as part of the consideration of strategic options to deliver new development.

However, at the time of preparing this Neighbourhood Plan the relevant Shropshire Development plan is the Core Strategy and the SAMDev.

Emerging Shropshire Local Plan

The Emerging Shropshire Local Plan in Policy SP2 Strategic Approach considers that the production of Neighbourhood Plans will be supported and can identify development opportunities which will complement proposals in the Local Plan. The policy also considers that where appropriate Neighbourhood Plans can also identify additional Community Clusters.

Policy SP3 supports the prioritisation of active travel through the creation and enhancement of walking and cycling links within and between new developments and new developments to existing neighbourhoods and community facilities.

Policy SP6 looks to ensure the health and well-being of individuals, communities and place. This will be achieved by ensuring the quality of life and delivery of community well-being, through the use of land’ type of development; the safeguarding, maintenance and improvement of community facilities and services; and by ensuring that the form, design, location and layout of new development enhances community well-being.

Policy SP7 in relation to housing development, will support development of housing in addition to the allocations set out in policies S1-S20 (S11.3 Community Clusters: Market Drayton Place Plan Area), there will be positive consideration of other sustainable housing development where this does not conflict with the policies of the Local Plan. The policy reiterates that additional housing development

which would support the reuse of disused land or premises within settlement development boundaries as shown on the Shropshire's policies map will be supported.

Policy SP9 recognises the rurality of much of Shropshire and the importance of ensuring the long-term sustainability of rural communities through the management of Community Clusters. This policy recognises the diversity of Community Clusters and the settlements within them, providing the starting point for assessing the appropriateness of development proposals within Community Cluster settlements.

Policy SP10 Managing Development in the Countryside also identifies Community Hubs and Community Clusters as the focus for new development within the rural area.

The Shropshire Local Plan also looks to manage and support town centres (Policy DP9), aiming to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Shropshire's network of Town Centres and High Streets in line with national policy. The policy goes on to support the provision of neighbourhood based local shopping and other community facilities will be supported where this will help consolidate and improve existing provision.

Policy DP14 Green Infrastructure expands on Shropshire's vision to improve and expand the green infrastructure network as an integral part of open space provision. All new development will need to ensure that they enhance existing green infrastructure assets and extends the green infrastructure network in accordance with the Shropshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, whilst also regarding Neighbourhood Plans and other relevant local strategies.

DP28 looks to improve communications and transport network in the borough, looking to widen travel and transport choices and improve connectivity and accessibility. It is considered that local travel options play an essential role in influencing travel behaviour including footways cycle ways (including the National Cycle Network), public rights of ways, bridleways and the canal network especially within or close to settlements.

Policy S11.3 is of particular importance considering the development of community clusters within the Market Drayton Place Plan Area including Adderley, Norton-In-Hales and Moreton Say. Within these community clusters residential and employment development will be delivered through appropriate small-scale windfall development, consistent with Community Cluster Policy SP9. Development proposals are also expected to positively respond to policies and guidelines within any relevant community-led plans and local needs.

4. Evidence Base

Consultation and Engagement

The Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan is a community led plan that derives from the vision and objectives of people who live within the Neighbourhood Area. From the outset the Three Parishes were determined that residents be kept informed and have an opportunity to inform the content of the Plan. Communication and consultation in a variety of forms have played a major part in developing the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan.

Following the approval of the designated area, the Steering Group held a number of Open Forums during March 2019. A forum was held in all three of the parishes where participants were able to enter their comments directly into a survey online or fill in a paper form. The comments from the paper forms were then transcribed by staff at Shropshire RCC and analysed. Participation from the public was broken down as follows:

- **37 Adderley Residents filled in the survey, 2 completed this online;**
- **30 Moreton Say residents filled in the survey, 12 online, the rest via paper form; and**
- **33 Norton-In-Hales residents filled in a survey, 2 online, the rest via paper form.**

In May 2019, the Steering Group went into local primary schools to gather the pupils' opinions on their parishes. This includes a number of multiple choice questions which considered the following subjects:

- **Use of Community Facilities;**
- **Mode of travel;**
- **Walking & Cycling;**
- **Likes and Dislikes of Areas;**
- **Play Areas; and**
- **Additions to their area.**

In October 2020 the Steering Group designed a resident's survey and organised distribution of these to each household. A total of 685 forms were distributed. 291 forms for Norton-In-Hales were distributed by hand and the forms for Adderley (198) and Moreton Say (196) were posted by Shropshire RCC on 2nd October 2020.

The survey was intended to be a household one, where the views of everyone in that household were combined into one response but extra submissions could be made by going online. With the on-line system, the answers were not 'locked in' until the respondents clicked 'Submit' at the very end of the survey. A 'Back' button allowed people to return to earlier sections to make changes. The online survey also offered a 'Restart' button to discard all previous answers and start again.

The deadline to complete the survey was 31st October but it stayed open until the end of November whilst the paper forms were being processed by Shropshire RCC and to encourage further response.

A total of 56 questions were included within the survey covering a number of key themes, the first two questions were a quick analysis on the draft vision statement, published by the Steering Group before covering the following themes:

- **About your household;**
- **Housing & Development;**
- **Your household's housing need;**
- **Jobs and the Local Economy;**

- **Transport;**
- **Environment;**
- **Countryside and green spaces; and**
- **Facilities.**

In summary overall:

- **A total of 160 responses were received of which 43 were submitted online (about 27%);**
- **116 responses were transcribed and added to the online responses into specialist software for analysis;**
- **Of the survey forms distributed by post, 1 came back as undeliverable, one came back entirely empty (this was not counted as a response) and one had a comment on the front to state that people in the household were with the status quo and was not filled in any further (this was not counted in the figures of respondents); and**
- **The overall response rate was 23.6%.**

Following the research undertaken by the Three Parishes, the aim was for the Neighbourhood Plan to be focused and concise as well as concentrate on the issues that can be influenced by town and country planning legislation.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the consultation process was taken online, as publication events could not take place due to associated rules which included the exclusion of large gatherings. The Steering Group have looked to reach out to all residents and the policies set out within this Neighbourhood Plan reflect the views of the community.

In addition to early consultation, the plan has now undergone Regulation 14 (Pre Submission) and has again been sent out for consultation. Responses received have been taken into account within this Regulation 15 draft and further details of the consultation exercise during Pre Submission is covered within the Consultation Statement that accompanies this Neighbourhood Plan.

Technical Evidence

A great deal of additional technical evidence has been collated by the Three Parishes in preparing this draft of the Neighbourhood Plan. This has been drawn from Shropshire Council sources; in particular, information compiled during the preparation of the emerging Local Plan Review and contributing to its extensive evidence base. This also included a Housing Needs Assessment prepared by AECOM to inform the housing policies within the plan.

* Copies of the documents can be found on the Three Parishes webpages <https://threeparishplan.org/documents/>

Strategic Environment Assessment

The content of a Neighbourhood Plan will be informed by a wide range of evidence. Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) where required, can provide a key component of the evidence base.

SEA's are required by the **Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and the Habitats Regulations (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017)**¹. SEA's are more likely to be necessary if both of the following two elements apply:

- **A Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites for development (for housing, employment etc.) and;**

¹ These regulations will continue to apply unless new legislation is introduced to withdraw or amend them.

- **The neighbourhood area contains sensitive environmental assets (e.g. a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) that may be affected by the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan.**

In light of the above, it is very unlikely that a Neighbourhood Plan would require an SEA if the plan is not allocating land for development or development is more likely to generate physical changes which lead to significant effects.

Another element of the Basic Conditions relates to **Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, often referred to as the Habitats Directive**. Under the Habitats Regulations which implement the Directive, an assessment referred to as an appropriate assessment must be undertaken if the plan in question is likely to have a significant effect on a European protected wildlife site.

For the SEA to be an effective process which adds significant value to plan making, it is vital that a Neighbourhood Plan is screened at the appropriate time. The Neighbourhood Plan should be screened as soon as there is sufficient information available to consider whether the proposed content of the plan or its likely intent are likely to lead to significant effects. A draft Screening Report has been prepared and is published for consultation alongside the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

The screening report, should be sent to the three statutory consultees for SEA these include: the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England². There is no timescale set out in the SEA Regulations for this consultation period; a period of five weeks is generally considered to be a suitable timeframe given other consultation provisions within the SEA Regulations.

² As set out by Regulation 4 of the SEA Regulations. The role of the statutory consultees within SEA is to bring their individual environmental expertise to the assessment process. Note: statutory consultees are not required to respond to screening requests. Limited resources mean they may need to prioritise the plans they engage with in detail based on an assessment of risk.

5. Visions and Objectives

Vision

The Three Parishes wish to retain their originality and beauty for the benefit of present and future generations. Residents value their community spirit, the rural setting and ready access to the countryside. They appreciate the need to retain these aspects, whilst noting the requirement to accommodate some new development. The community sees itself as friendly and welcoming to all new residents, whilst also looking to retain the area's values and history.

The Neighbourhood Plan must also include the wider community beyond the 'village boundary' that includes scattered housing, small businesses and farms. These form an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan and need to be included in its formulation, whilst balancing the demands on the natural and historic environment.

Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan is intended to work for the benefit and wellbeing of all the residents of the Three Parishes and retain those aspects which make and sustain a community. These include churches, local schools, village halls, green spaces, recreation facilities and community assets such as pubs and clubs, farms and small businesses. The villages should be a place to feel safe with suitable infrastructure for both pedestrians and vehicles.

The vision sees new and young families as the future and as such the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to accommodate their needs within the overall values of the community. The community must also accommodate the needs of older residents. These should include good services and communications, both physical and technological. The Neighbourhood Plan should create an environment that makes all this possible.

Figure 12: Moreton Say Millennium Pool



Objectives

Provision of Adequate Housing

1. To allow future infill development in the Three Parishes which respects the variety of building styles and materials used in the area.
2. Limited infill in each settlement which respects the rural outlook, maintaining gaps between settlements.
3. To support the provision of an appropriate number and range of house types and tenures on appropriate sites meeting the needs of people living in the Three Parishes.

Employment Opportunities

4. Encourage suitable employment opportunities through conversion of existing buildings or small well-designed buildings in appropriate locations.

Natural Environment

5. To retain its largely rural character whilst having enhanced range of services and facilities offered to all age groups.
6. To protect and enhance green areas, natural habitat, wildlife and biodiversity in and around the parishes and to encourage appropriate management.
7. Reduce our carbon emissions, making sure development mitigates for and enables adaption to the effects of climate change.

Transport and Movement

8. To work and improve public transport opportunities minimising the use of cars in and around the parishes, and reduce the associated problems of noise, pollution and parking.
9. To provide a safe, accessible and well-maintained network of roads, cycle routes, footpaths, rights of way and pavements, whilst retaining rural character to support more sustainable modes of transport and offering healthier lifestyle options.

Built Environment and Heritage

10. To respect the Norton in Hales conservation area and support sympathetic design to protect and enhance the conservation area to the benefit of the entire community.
11. To protect the character and setting of the Three Parishes historic buildings, ensuring new development is in keeping with other buildings and their surroundings.

Community Facilities

12. To protect existing facilities and services considered important for a vibrant community, supporting development of new ones which will benefit the community.
13. Increase opportunities to access community facilities and to enhance the range of activities and facilities available for all.
14. To encourage suitable employment opportunities and communications connectivity (broadband and mobile phone).

6. Policies

The following policies were devised to reflect the opinions of the Three Parishes and deliver the objectives and visions set out in the previous chapter, in being able to guide and influence new developments and maintain the Three Parishes attractive and historic character. These policies will look to help planning decisions to be made on new developments through the planning application process.

As set out in the policy context the planning system is set nationally by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and locally by the Shropshire Local Plan – in this case the Shropshire Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan. Policies in a Neighbourhood Plan must align with the framework both nationally and locally and not conflict or undermine it (NPPF paragraph 29).

However, the current Shropshire Development Plan is now out of date and therefore the existing Core Strategy and SAMDev policies are under review. Shropshire have now reached the examination stage, therefore an appropriate and sensible approach from this point is to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plan on the basis of the emerging strategy and policies, working closely with Shropshire Council during the preparation of both documents.

Housing and Design

This section of the Neighbourhood Plan focuses on both the design of housing as well as the desired housing mix for the Three Parishes. In previous consultations housing has been considered by a large amount of respondents, including the design of new housing which is to remain in keeping with their surroundings through to type and tenure.

The quality of housing is considered to be a major factor in what makes our neighbourhoods so enjoyable. Their influence can have a major impact on our health and well-being which is influenced by housing conditions, affordability, security and tenure. These are all considered factors that contribute to our life satisfaction.

Not only do our homes satisfy our daily needs but they also impact our surroundings and wider neighbourhood. It is therefore important that the design of housing is carefully considered as it is important to the Three Parishes that the visual characteristics of their villages are taken into account.

Key themes covered in previous consultations considered that it was important for new housing developments to consider the following:

- Scale of the surroundings;
- Character and positioning of surrounding buildings;
- Design of surrounding buildings;
- Materials of surrounding buildings; and
- Open space character of the villages and settlements within the Three Parishes.

Another important factor considered within this section and highlighted within previous consultation is the desired housing mix of the area, with national policy supporting the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes, including opportunities for home ownership and the creation of socially mixed communities.

H1 Housing Design

Development proposals which are consistent with wider development plan policies for the area, should demonstrate high quality design and contribute to the beauty and sustainability of the built environment, and have regard to the following:

- Do not adversely affect the local characteristics and setting of their surroundings, keeping with the scale, material and character of intrinsic buildings and the layout of the area;
- Maintain visual amenity of the Parishes providing high quality boundary treatment that is appropriate to maintaining the rural character;
- Minimise adverse impacts on the amenity of future or adjacent property by reason of overshadowing, overlooking, visual intrusion, noise and disturbance and odour;
- Complements the existing materials seen locally, with particular consideration given to window design, doorways and chimneys;
- Provide good pedestrian and cycle connections to existing travel routes;
- Provide adequate storage for bins and recycling;
- Incorporates Secured by Design standards where it is reasonable to do so;
- Support features beneficial to wildlife and biodiversity where appropriate;
- Delivers energy efficient and environmentally friendly measures such as the installation of solar panels or heat pumps; rainwater porous driveways and parking areas; including proactive measures to reduce CO2 emissions; and
- Parking does not have significant adverse impacts on existing road and pedestrian safety.

Evidence and Justification

Consultation responses considered the impact that design can have on their surroundings as well as the impact on open spaces within the Three Parishes. This policy approach is seen as particularly important when dealing with proposals for infill applications to avoid complications relating to the inappropriate design of new developments. Further responses to the impact of new development in the area includes the following:

- Loss of identity (as villages);
- Impact on significant views;
- Inadequate parking;
- Loss of countryside;
- Increased traffic;
- Unsafe pedestrian routes; and
- Development not fitting with the current character of the area.

In addition to reflecting previous consultation responses, the policy advocates Secured by Design, looking to ensure that developers properly consider the measures involved in designing out crime to create and maintain a sustainable community.

This policy compliments **SP5 High-Quality Development** where Shropshire Council seeks to ensure the delivery of high-quality design in all development, stating that development will:

- a. Ensure the creation of better places;
- b. Promote individual and community well-being;
- c. Promote healthy and active lifestyles; and
- d. Enhance the way places are enjoyed and experienced by those who live, work or visit.

The NPPF further considers that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and place is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is considered to be a key aspect of sustainable development, creating better places in which to live and work helping to make development acceptable to communities.

This is in tandem with the aims of the Local Plan, which is concerned with ensuring that new development maintains and enhances the character, appearance and historic interests of the County's settlements and countryside, including its distinctive landscape. This is also in line with the West Midlands Design Charter.

This policy complements the criteria set out within Policy SP5 of the Shropshire Local Plan Review and the requirements of the NPPF. This policy conforms to:

- NPPF 2021 paragraphs: 8b, 20, 28, 92, 97, 126, 127, 129, 130 and 134.
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles, CS17 Environmental Networks.
- SAMDev Plan Policy: MD2 Sustainable Design and MD12 Natural Environment
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; Policy SP5 High-Quality Development, SP6 Health and Wellbeing, SP10 Managing Development in the Countryside, DP23 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment and S11.3 Market Drayton Place Plan Area.
- Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 5 and 8.

H2 Housing Mix and Tenure

Development proposals for housing should meet identified local housing needs, and provide appropriately for the sites, a mix of sizes, types and tenures, including homes for smaller households suited to sheltered accommodation and those who need support due to disabilities.

Evidence and Justification

Achieving a suitable housing mix for the Three Parishes is an important consideration that plays a significant role in creating a sustainable, inclusive and mixed community. Respondents in previous consultation were asked '*If new homes are to be built, what type/tenure of new housing do you want to see built within the Three Parishes?*' in which they were able to select as many options as needed. The sub elements included:

- **Homes to be buy by anyone;**
- **Homes to rent by anyone;**
- **Affordable housing to buy or rent with preference for local people;**
- **Sheltered accommodation for older people to rent or buy with preference for local people;**
- **Homes for those with disabilities to live independently;**
- **Residential care; and**
- **Shared ownership homes.**

From the number of respondents for each sub element of this question the highest response rate and subsequent vote was for '**Homes to buy by anyone**' at 95% obtained a total of 133 votes for yes. Overwhelming support was also given for affordable housing (75.3% yes), sheltered accommodation (66% yes) and homes for those with disabilities (76.1% yes). Residential care (68.9% no) and shared ownership homes (61% no) did not receive support from respondents.

Moreover the Three Parishes Housing Needs Assessment (completed in March 2020) considers that new development provides an opportunity to build dwellings that would be appropriate to the needs and financial capabilities of both young households and older households who may wish to downsize.

In the context of the Three Parishes' comparatively large stock overall, the evidence reviewed in the report considers the Neighbourhood Plan should prioritise the provision of modest sized homes with 2 and 3 bedroom homes. In terms of demographic change, new development might involve the following share of dwelling sizes: 22.7% as 1 bedroom, 38.5% as two bedrooms and 38.8% as three bedrooms.

The NPPF considers that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. The aim of Policy H2 looks to establish the Three Parishes overall approach to promoting housing schemes that meet a range of housing needs, particularly sheltered accommodation, affordable homes and homes for those with disabilities. This is in line with Shropshire Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) as stated within Policy DP1 Residential Mix.

The purpose of the SHMA is to analyse different types and tenures of dwellings taking into account that households of different ages and different compositions will have differing needs. The SHMA illustrates the diversity of dwelling stock across the County, providing a breakdown of accommodation type for Place Plan Areas, including Market Drayton of which the Three Parishes falls within. These areas in turn encompass some of the most remote parts of the County and have the highest average house prices.

Further evidence through Market Drayton and Surrounding Area Placement Plan 2019/20 considers that Community Hubs (including Adderley) will provide additional dwellings over the period to 2026. This will be delivered through infilling, groups of houses and conversions which may be acceptable on suitable sites within the development boundaries, and delivery of development taking into account individual area requirements.

This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF 2021 paragraphs: 8b, 50, 60, 62, 78
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS11 Type and Affordability of Housing
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; Policy SP7 Managing Housing Development, SP9 Managing Development in Community Clusters, DP1 Residential Mix and S11.3 Market Drayton Place Plan Area.
- Neighbourhood Plan Objective 3.

Employment and Business

The importance of the landscape and setting of the Three Parishes is considered an important asset to their communities. Accordingly any development that is related to new businesses or small changes of use, need to ensure that there will not be a materially negative impact on neighbourhoods residential properties or the wider landscape.

It is however recognised that appropriate businesses can produce employment opportunities and subsequent wider economic gains through other means such as tourism. Historically in the rural area, agriculture has played a major role in shaping the character of neighbourhoods, this is further reflected in the overall profile for the Three Parishes which has the following industry sectors as the most populous for working residents in the area (15.5%):

- Agriculture;
- Forestry; and
- Fishing.

Other popular industry sectors included Wholesale and Retail Trade (14.4%) and Education (10.9%). This is in stark contrast to Shropshire with the three most populous industry sectors being Wholesale and Retail Trade (16.1%); Human Health and Social Work (13.7%) and Manufacturing (10.6%).

There is also an opportunity, through the dominance of agriculture, to promote farm diversification. Farms that can successfully diversify are often able to put their existing farm assets to use, whilst providing economic gain that may otherwise have been lost.

EMP1 Small Scale Employment

Development proposals that provide employment opportunities will be encouraged in the following circumstances:

- Conversion of existing buildings across the Neighbourhood Plan area, subject to heritage considerations and the impact of provision on neighbouring properties, the local environment, the highway network and parking, subject to it being an appropriate use. This could, where feasible, include the re-use of existing farm buildings or be a part of farm diversification; or
- Provision of small well-designed new buildings within the built-up areas of the Three Parishes, subject to it being an appropriate use and design.

Proposals for the re-use of land or buildings on existing employment sites for uses other than employment purposes should demonstrate:

- It can be demonstrated through a viability appraisal that the on-going use of the premises or land for employment purposes is no longer viable; and
- The alternative proposal would provide demonstrable benefits to the local community and contribute to its long-term sustainability.

The policies below set out the ways in which employment opportunities can be boosted, whilst controlling the extent of new employment development in the Three Parishes, as well as improving opportunities for farm diversification.

Evidence and Justification

When asked the question in consultation ‘**Should new business be encouraged within the Three Parishes Area?**’ the overwhelming response were in favour totalling 81.5% of all votes cast (total 135 respondents). In relation to the most populous jobs in the Three Parishes, much support from respondents in terms of what kind of employment the plan should encourage were reflected as follows:

- Agriculture/Local Produce (91.6% yes);
- Pubs, Restaurants and Cafes (76.3% yes);
- Home Businesses (89.4% yes);
- Shops and Retail (60.7% yes);
- Tourism, Leisure and Crafts (76.2% yes); and
- Financial/Professional (71.9% yes).

Employment areas that were not supported with a majority vote included:

- Transport, Storage and Distribution (89.1% no); and
- Light Industrial (76.4% no).

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to promote rural enterprise by supporting small scale employment uses which could in turn be provided by new buildings, conversions of agricultural buildings, or other changes of use. The economic benefits that new businesses may have on the Three Parishes would also be of great benefit to neighbourhoods within the area. The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance for how small-scale employment could be implemented into the neighbourhoods, whilst respecting the rural characteristics of the Three Parishes.

This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF 2021 paragraphs: 8a, 20, 81, 84, 85
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles, CS13: Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment CS17 Environmental Networks.
- SAMDev Plan Policy: MD2 Sustainable Design, MD9: Protecting Employment Areas, MD12 Natural Environment, MD13 Historic Environment
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP3 Climate Change, SP8 managing Development in Community Hubs, SP10 managing Development in the Countryside, SP12 Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy, SP13 Delivering Economic Growth and Enterprise and S11.3 Market Drayton Place Plan Area.
- Neighbourhood Plan Objective 4.

EMP2 Farm Diversification

Development proposals for the diversification of farms will be supported where:

- Development does not result in unacceptable effects on the landscape or ecological or heritage significance of buildings concerned;
- Development does not result in an unacceptable level of heavy goods vehicles on rural roads;
- Development demonstrates that there is no significant adverse impact on nearby properties by noise, dust, odour or light pollution; and
- New development would either sustain or increase local employment; and
- It can be demonstrated that the development proposal would make an ongoing contribution to sustaining the agricultural enterprise of the local area as a whole.

Where development proposals for the diversification of farms is not possible or the continued use of the business is unviable, proposals might consider rewilding opportunities

Evidence and Justification

Farming has and always will be important to our economy, providing a secure food system and delivering a wide range of environmental and rural community benefits. Farms in the Three Parishes contribute to the maintenance of the surrounding landscape within which the villages reside whilst also having a major impact on the rural character and appeal of the area.

Hedges and hedgerow trees not only provide shelter for livestock, support for wildlife and reduce soil erosion, but they also make an important contribution to the landscape character of the Three Parishes, but like most areas of England, they have suffered from a reduction in agricultural workforce leading to many gaps and poor maintenance, and especially a lack of traditional hedge laying.

Previous consultation has raised a number of responses regarding the impact of farming in the area. Question 43 asks **‘Much of the land in the Three Parishes is graded for agricultural use. Do you wish there to be policies that control development of this land?’** the options identified were as follow:

- Change from traditional agricultural use to specialised agricultural use. E.g. poultry, exotic breeds, new crops etc.;
- Different use of the land that is not agricultural. E.g. stables, tourism, livery, tourism, leisure; and
- Different use of farm buildings for small business.

Support for different uses of land that is not agricultural, and different uses of farm buildings each received majority votes in favour with 65.6% (yes) and 66.2% (yes) respectively.

Further responses that were raised by consultees in relation to agricultural use considered the impact that agriculture has on the highway, air pollution as well as the natural environment. Reintroducing animal and plant species, through rewilding of sites, can greatly assist in strengthening ecosystems, as well as assist in reduced carbon emissions absorbed through natural landscaping.

Other responses also considered the potential for changes of use or diversification of farm land. Additionally, open comments taken in 2019 highlighted an openness for agricultural enterprise, tourism, homeworking and village shops.

Local Plan Policy SP10 considers that sustainable employment such as tourism, leisure, other business and community development proposals in the countryside will be positively considered, where they maintain or enhance countryside vitality and character. This includes small-scale new economic development which diversifies the rural economy, including farm diversification schemes.

This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF 2021 paragraphs: 8a, 20, 81, 84, 85
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles, CS5: Countryside and Green Belt, CS13: Economic Development, Enterprise and Employment, CS17 Environmental Networks.
- SAMDev Plan Policy: MD2 Sustainable Design, MD12 Natural Environment, MD13 Historic Environment
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP3 Climate Change, SP8 Managing Development in Community Hubs, SP10 Managing Development in the Countryside, SP12 Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy, SP13 Delivering Economic Growth and Enterprise and S11.3 Market Drayton Place Plan Area.
- Neighbourhood Plan Objective 4.

Natural Environment

From providing space for physical activity to providing areas for biodiversity to thrive, the natural environment is vital to creating a healthy and sustainable community. The importance of our open spaces and natural environment not only provides communities with areas for recreation and amenity value but also contributes to the importance of the rural setting throughout the Three Parishes.

It is therefore important for the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that local people have access to a range of high quality open spaces and environmental assets, and that development proposals can provide appropriate provision and support towards delivering or enabling access to such assets, and to enhance the rural character of the Three Parishes.

G1 Protecting Public Open Spaces in the Three Parishes

Areas of public open space will be protected and development on these sites should demonstrate:

- The proposal will provide a replacement facility to an equal or improved standard in a suitable alternative location; or
- The proposal will provide alternative areas of public open space to an equal or improved standard and replace that being lost; or
- The proposal can secure other wider benefits, which outweigh the loss of such open space; or
- Appropriate mitigation measures are provided to compensate for the impact upon existing provision.

Evidence and Justification

The policy looks to protect areas of public open space, helping to achieve the NPPFs aim of promoting healthy communities by maintaining areas or adequately replacing open spaces that are used for recreational activities.

Previous consultation responses also demonstrated strong support for protecting open space and the character of the villages and settlements with 98.6% of respondents considering open space to be an important factor for development to protect.

The NPPF further considers that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF 2021 paragraphs: 8c, 84d, 93, 98, 99
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- SAMDev Plan Policy: MD2 Sustainable Design
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP8 Managing Development in Community Hubs, SP10 Managing Development in the Countryside, SP12 Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy, SP13 Delivering Economic Growth and Enterprise and DP15 Open Space and Recreation.
- Neighbourhood Plan Objective 4.

G2 Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity

Development should be planned and designed to encourage biodiversity. Where relevant, reflecting its scale and nature, it should enhance local wildlife species and habitats, demonstrating how they aim to achieve at least a 10% net gain for biodiversity.

The following are encouraged;

- Preserving or creating wildlife habitats, including trees and hedgerows on their boundaries;
- Establishing and maximising wildlife corridors linking up to local green infrastructure assets through the use of native planting;
- Protecting and enhancing existing wildlife corridors such as the Shropshire Union Canal corridor, ensuring external lighting avoid adverse impacts to nocturnal species;
- Retain ancient, veteran, mature trees as well as trees that have amenity value. Where trees must be lost they should be replaced at a ratio of 2:1 with a preference for native trees/fruit or nut trees;
- Implement Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), using natural features such as drainage ditches and ponds;
- Provide wildlife friendly features in areas of open space; and
- Where on-site net gain for biodiversity is not appropriate then other areas will be considered, in accordance with wider government policy and the latest biodiversity metric.

Evidence and Justification

In recent years there has been a radical change in attitude towards the need for biodiversity net gain at both national and local planning level. As a society it is now accepted that we need to conserve and enhance our biodiversity in the face of a global biodiversity crisis.

Nationally, the UK government is committed to building Nature Recovery Networks to “help us deal with 3 of the biggest challenges we face: biodiversity loss, climate change and wellbeing”.

The NPPF further backs the protection that planning should act as a way of minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, this includes establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

The NPPF also considers that plans should “promote the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gain for biodiversity.

The Three Parishes is covered by large areas of open countryside with a strong rural character comprised high scenic quality, with historical, natural and cultural qualities. Although natural diversity is typical in this rural landscape, there is good connectivity of hedgerows and trees to larger areas of woodland and open fields, this in turn supports an abundant and diverse range of wildlife. The range

of species within the area can be found on Shropshire Council's website through site based ecology reports³.

Moreover, through consultation it is considered that there is an opportunity to further enhance the biodiversity of the Three Parishes through a wildlife corridor route that links the Tern valley, disused railways tracks, the Shropshire Union Canal and the Ducklow Brook. Opportunities such as this would be in line with aims of Policy G2 where the Three Parishes are looking to establish and maximise wildlife corridors.

The importance of protecting biodiversity in the Three Parishes is also reflected within the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, with several respondents supporting the protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the Three Parishes with a particular focus on wildlife protection and maintenance of trees and hedgerows.

By protecting biodiversity in the area, this policy helps to deliver one of the key aims of the NPPF in conserving and enhancing the natural environment, and ensure that the valued wildlife characteristics of the Three Parishes are protected and enhanced.

Additionally, this also supports Shropshire Council's aim to ensure that all development delivers at least a 10% net gain for biodiversity, as well as avoiding harm to Shropshire's natural assets and achieving their conservation, enhancement and restoration.

This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF 2021 paragraphs: 8c, 15, 153, 174, 179
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles, CS17 Environmental Networks.
- SAMDev Plan Policy: MD2 Sustainable Design, MD12 Natural Environment
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP6 Health and Wellbeing, DP12 The Natural Environment, DP14 Green Infrastructure and DP16 Landscaping of New Development.
- Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 5 and 6

³ Shropshire Council Site Based Ecology Reports Map <https://shropshire.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity-ecology-and-planning/site-based-reports-and-ecology-maps/>

G3 Carbon Reduction

Local development proposals should be designed to meet a high level of sustainability and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting zero carbon emissions. Relevant development proposals should be supported by a statement setting out how the development will achieve this, including an indication of:

- compliance with extant energy standards which should aim to exceed building standards, and;
- generation of energy on site from renewable and low carbon sources.

The installation of community renewable energy generation will be supported where the following criteria are met:

- Generation facilities will result in a significant reduction in community carbon emissions over their lifetime;
- Ownership of the renewable energy generation facilities are settled prior to agreement and approval;
- The businesses case for each facility is sound, and is reasonably required to meet community objectives;
- Where the noise, smell and visual appearance of the installations are minimised such that they do not cause unacceptable nuisance;
- Each facility is installed in such a way that land can be used and subsequently returned to its existing use over time, as more efficient technologies are developed; and
- The development of any such community renewable energy generation meets a majority approval from the community.
- All renewable energy developments must result in a significant reduction in community energy costs
- The development seeks to reduce carbon emissions during construction.

Where appropriate selection of suitable locations for such facilities is based on choosing sites:

- Of low ecological value and wildlife impact;
- Where land requirement can be minimised by adopting less space intensive technologies;
- Where the land can be shared by renewable energy facilities and some agricultural use as appropriate;
- Where on-site compensatory measures can be and are taken for any residual impact.

Evidence and Justification

The effect of climate change means temperatures are rising around the world and are leading to more extreme weather events and further danger to the population. However, unless further action is taken, the planet could still warm by more than 2C by the end of this century. If nothing is done, scientists think global warming could exceed 4C, leading to devastating heatwaves, millions losing their homes to rising sea levels and an irreversible loss of plant and animal species.

The document 'Neighbourhood planning in a climate emergency' (Centre for Sustainable Energy and TCPA, February 2020), notes that rural communities often have greater potential for renewable

energy, and that ‘a requirement for 10% of energy to be provided from renewable energy isn’t that ambitious anymore’.

Public consultation also looked to highlight the public’s opinion on alternative energy sources either on a domestic or large scale, these included:

- Domestic Wind Turbines (56% yes)
- Commercial Wind Turbines (71.1% no)
- Solar Panels on Individual Homes (77.4% yes)
- Solar Farms (54.7% yes)
- Ground/Air/Water Heat Pumps (81.3% yes)

In addition to the options above (which were largely in favour) further comments covered a wide variety of issues in our climate, including a desire to reduce our carbon emissions and encourage further tree planting to increase carbon sequestration.

On a local level Shropshire Council also declared a climate emergency in 2019, with climate change representing a major challenge to people’s way of life, and alongside this the Council is looking to ensure that development meets today’s needs for future generations. Additionally, in 2008 the Climate Change Act required that the country reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050.

In June 2019, the Government announced that the UK will ‘eradicate its net contribution to climate change by 2050’ by legislating for net zero emissions. As part of this, all buildings need to be net zero carbon by 2050. However, the Committee on Climate Change has reported that by 2030, current plans would at best deliver around half of the required reduction in emissions, 100-170 MtCO₂e per year short of what is required by the carbon budgets. A 36% reduction in UK emissions is therefore required from 2016 to 2030, with approximately a 20% cut in emissions (89 MtCO₂e) required from the buildings sector as a whole. The Committee has made clear that this will require “stronger new build standards for energy efficiency and low carbon heat”.

This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF 2021 paragraphs: 8c, 152, 153, 154, 155
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- SAMDev Plan Policy: MD8 Infrastructure Provision
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP3 Climate Change, SP6 Health and Well-Being and DP11 Reducing Carbon Emissions.
- Neighbourhood Plan Objective 7.

Movement and Connection

Transport and movement plays an important role in supporting economic growth and enhancing community where people want to live, work and play. It is also essential in achieving sustainable development and ensuring safe accessibility at various levels for all individuals.

Transport is not just about functional journeys, but is also about recreation and opportunities for physical activities, such as walking and cycling. Transport options can have a big impact on social exclusion, especially for groups with less access to motor vehicles, such as the old and the young. This can limit access to employment and community facilities.

The following policies look to address the challenges faced in the Three Parishes where transport options are more limited and the dependency on private travel is far more prevalent.

T1 Linkages and Connections

Development proposals that support the enhancement and improvement of existing public rights of way, including the Shropshire Union Canal towpath, will be supported where appropriate.

All new planning applications for relevant development should demonstrate safe and accessible routes for pedestrians and cyclists to local services, facilities and existing transport networks, particularly where they link with public transport.

The addition of pavements or any other measures serving the same function should be in keeping with the rural nature of the Three Parishes and their local character.

Evidence and Justification

Consultation responses when asked **‘If the opportunity arose, what new facilities would you like to see in your Parish?’** considered several different options with the majority in favour of public footpaths; bridleways, public transport and road safety measures.

Traffic generation as a result of new developments should be mitigated by improved links to public transport in order to further minimise the additional carbon footprint generated by new housing. Although this is strictly not controlled by planning legislation this is certainly affected or influenced by new development and appropriate enhancements can be sought through the planning process.

According to the 2011 census 6.1% of households across the Three Parishes did not own a car or van. However, the proportion of households with 2 cars or vans was vastly higher at 42.4% and 3 cars or vans at 14%. These statistics suggest that households across the Three Parishes were more reliant on private vehicles for their day to day needs, given the lack of public transport options across the local area.

This policy is reflected in the Local Plan Review which seeks to improve communications and transport networks supporting the infrastructure and services to widen travel and transport choices and to improve connectivity and accessibility whilst moving towards reduced car dependency and managing the impacts of transport movements on communities and our environment.

This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF 2021 paragraphs: 8b, 88, 92, 98, 100, 104, 105, 106, 112
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS7 Communications and Transport, CS16 Tourism, Culture and Leisure.
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP3 Climate Change, SP6 Health and Wellbeing, DP11 Reducing Carbon Emissions and DP28 Communications and Transport
- Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 9 and 10.

T2 Parking

Development proposals that result in the loss of off-street public car parking will not be supported. Alternative schemes will be considered if equivalent or improved parking capacity is provided elsewhere.

Retail, commercial or business developments that provide appropriate parking facilities that avoid or minimise 'on street' parking will also be supported.

Opportunities, where possible, to provide electric charging facilities for both commercial and domestic development will be supported.

Evidence and Justification

Provision of parking spaces can be beneficial to communities, helping to reduce traffic obstructions, increase road safety and provide convenience for householders, businesses and visitors in the area. In previous consultation Question 20 '**What worries you most about further development within the Three Parishes?**' a large proportion of respondents considered inadequate parking to be an issue, of which the Three Parishes are looking to address through the implementation of this policy.

When asked what could be improved parking was regularly considered among written responses stating the need for adequate parking, school parking in Norton in Hales, and the issues of parking on main roads near schools and parking facilities.

Whilst there are no county standards for off street parking facilities on new builds. The NPPF states that if setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:

- a) The accessibility of the development;
- b) The type, mix and use of development;
- c) The availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- d) Local car ownership levels; and
- e) The need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

The standards above are considered appropriate for the Three Parishes, due to car ownership levels and lower levels of public transport.

This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF 2021 paragraphs: 104, 107, 108, 110
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test and SP6 Health and Wellbeing
- Neighbourhood Plan Objective 9.

T3 Broadband Connecting the Parishes

Development proposals that provide access to super-fast broadband network within villages and outlying properties in the countryside, as well as improving speed of existing services, will be supported, provided the location and design of any above-ground network installations have regard to the character of the local area.

Proposals must provide appropriate ducting suited to fibre connections technologies that is either connected to the public highway; through satellite broadband; a community led local access network; or to another location that can be justified.

Proposals should demonstrate how any development will contribute to and be compatible with local fibre or internet connectivity. This should be through a 'Connectivity Statement' provided with relevant planning applications. Such statements should include details of:

- The intended land use and the anticipated connectivity requirements of the development;
- Known nearby data networks and their anticipated speed (fixed copper, 3G, 4G, 5G, fibre, satellite, microwave etc.);
- Realistic viability and delivery assessments of connection potential or contribution to any such networks; and
- Measures taken by the applicants to work with relevant providers to enable Superfast Broadband is made available at the point of occupation or as soon as possible thereafter.

Evidence and Justification

In the Government's Planning Reforms published in August 2020 one of the key challenges highlighted was digital connectivity. Superfast broadband – defined as a service delivering more than 30Mbps – is available to 95% of homes and businesses in Britain. Yet more than half of those living in rural areas do not have access to even 10Mbps, despite it being a legal right in the "Rural Economy and Levelling Up" report.

The rollout of broadband across the UK is complicated by limitations imposed by financing and economies of scale, as well as existing infrastructure and difficult terrain. The report points out that rural areas are "beset" by these problems and lists improved access to land, and for planning reforms to facilitate infrastructure development as solutions.

Previous consultation responses indicate that when asked what could be improved, several responses consisted of the need for improved broadband. This continued to be a theme under Jobs and the Economy with some of the respondents stating a need to develop faster broadband.

Question 49 '**How important is broadband access to your household?**' had a response rate of 97.5% with 93.5% of respondents considering broadband access to be very important. Furthermore when asked '**Is the speed of your broadband a limiting factor in your household's internet use?**' 53.2% of respondents considered broadband to be an issue, of which the policy is looking to address head on.

High speed broadband is a critical factor in securing the sustainability of the Three Parishes and unlocking untapped economic potential. This is further backed by the NPPF which considers advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure essential for economic growth and social well-being.

Shropshire Council also considers broadband as an integral function for businesses and communities to support economic growth, social inclusion and community safety. This policy therefore conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF, 2021 paragraphs: 8, 114
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS7 Communications and Transport
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP12 Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy, DP27 Broadband and Mobile Communications Infrastructure and DP28 Communications and Transport.
- Neighbourhood Plan Objective 13.

Built Environment and Heritage

Historic buildings and Conservation Areas within a community not only add to the aesthetics and cultural values of an area, but they also have a kinder impact on the environment and attract more people to the area. Therefore preserving these buildings is not only beneficial for a community's culture and heritage, but also for the community's local economy.

Within the Three Parishes there is one conservation area (shown in Appendix 4) at Norton in Hales village. This was designated on 1st March 2007 and covers most of the built-up area of the village. In addition there are several Grade II and II* listed buildings (Appendix 3), with the greatest concentration of listed buildings being found around the main villages of Adderley and Norton In Hales, as well as a considerable number along the Shropshire Union Canal corridor. Historic halls such as Brand Hall, west of Norton In Hales, includes a Grade II* listed hall and several Grade II and II* structures within the grounds of the hall.

A scheduled monument is located north of Adderley village, approximately 75m North West of Pool House. The monument includes the earthwork and buried remains of a motte castle and an 18th century icehouse.

LE1 Conservation of the Three Parishes Historic Character

Development proposals will be supported that preserve and enhance the historic character of the Three Parishes including their listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and other heritage assets, whether designated or otherwise, considered to contribute to local or historic interest, together with their settings, including the Norton In Hales Conservation Area. In addition, development proposals should contribute to local character and make a positive contribution to the locally distinctive historic character of the Three Parishes.

Proposals will be supported that:

- Make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area through high quality design with buildings respecting the height, size, scale, materials and massing of adjacent buildings, plot width and form;
- Respect the local identity and pattern of development and built form, including the use of traditional materials;
- Retain locally important buildings, structures and open spaces that contribute to the Three Parishes rural character;
- Avoid substantial demolition, alteration, extension or other development that causes significant harm to a historic building's significance, including its setting;
- Use the historic character of the Parishes to inform the design concepts of new developments, this includes development proposals for additional buildings within farmsteads;
- Protect or enhance the setting of listed buildings through appropriately sited and designed developments; and
- Retain the historic sandstone boundary walls.

Development proposals likely to have a significant impact on local historic character and distinctiveness and/or on heritage assets should include should clearly demonstrate that there would be substantial public benefits that would outweigh any harm.

Evidence and Justification

Question 56 of the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire asks **‘If anyone in your household has any further comments about the Neighbourhood Plan or if they wish to expand on any earlier comments then please do so below’**, in response several respondent’s commented on the heritage values of the Three Parishes and protecting these values for the future.

The purpose of the policy is to draw upon the importance of the Three Parishes historic and rural character alongside the conservation area in Norton In Hales. The emphasis is where possible to preserve and enhance the heritage value of not only Listed Buildings and scheduled monuments but also buildings of historic interest of which there are many within the neighbourhood area.

The Local Plan considers that development proposals offer valuable opportunities to enhance the historic environment and that heritage assets make an important contribution to the County’s character and local distinctiveness.

This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF, 2021 paragraphs:8c, 130c, 189, 190, 194, 199, 200, 201 and 202
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles, CS17 Environmental Networks.
- SAMDev Plan Policy: MD2 Sustainable Design, MD13 Historic Environment
- Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; Policy SP5 High-Quality Development, SP6 Health and Wellbeing, SP10 Managing Development in the Countryside, SP12 Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy, DP10 Tourism, Culture and Leisure and DP23 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.
- It will help deliver Neighbourhood Plan Objective 1.

Community Facilities

Community facilities contribute to the overall quality of life in the Neighbourhood Area and meet a wide variety of needs for the Three Parishes. These can provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community, and play an important role in the development of vibrant neighbourhoods by creating a sense of place and providing opportunities for people to meet and interact socially.

COM1 Community Facilities

There will be a presumption in favour of the protection of existing community facilities.

The proposed re-use of local community facilities by other forms of community use will be strongly encouraged.

Any proposal that would result in the loss of community amenities will not be supported unless it satisfies the following criteria:

- The proposed use will provide equal or greater benefits to the community; and
- Any replacement facilities are built on sites which are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and have adequate car parking.

Proposals for new community facilities, in appropriate locations, will be supported if the development contributes to the health and wellbeing of the public.

Evidence and Justification

In all consultations with the public in relation to both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan, there was significant concern that community facilities should be retained in order to keep the Three Parishes a viable and active community. The Shropshire Local Plan also recognises the importance of community facilities in the rural area and stresses that it is especially important that these facilities are protected. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to build on this approach by protecting existing community facilities.

Question 52 'How often do members of your household use the following facilities in your Parish?' the following options were presented:

- Playground
- Church
- Playing Field
- Public House
- Public Footpaths and Bridleways
- Cricket Club
- Tennis Club
- Bowls Club
- Village Hall
- Canal
- Village Shop

Each of those listed below had a number of options and varied greatly between with some uses such as public footpaths and the canal being used frequently and uses such as the Cricket and Tennis Clubs being more specific and varying to few times a year to rarely.

However, when asked '**If the opportunity arose, what new facilities would you like to see in your Parish?**' the majority of respondents supported facilities for older (78.4%) and young people (76.4%) as well as leisure and recreational facilities (65.7%), this clearly shows support for the implementation of new community facilities in communities.

This policy conforms to the following policies and objectives:

- NPPF 2021 Paragraphs 7, 9, 16, 20, 28, 70, 84d, 187
- Shropshire Core Strategy Policy: CS6 Sustainable Design and Development Principles, CS8 Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision
- Shropshire Local Plan: Policy SP1 The Shropshire Test; SP10 Managing Development in the Countryside; SP12 Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy; SP13.7 Delivering Sustainable Growth and Enterprise; DP9 .8 and DP9.9 Managing and Supporting Town Centres; DP10 Tourism, Culture and Leisure; DP15 Open Space and Recreation
- It will help deliver Neighbourhood Plan Objectives: 11 and 12.

8. Monitoring and Review

It is expected that Shropshire Council, as the Planning Authority, will continue to monitor progress relating to the number of dwellings and number of affordable homes delivered during the Plan period, as part of the wider monitoring responsibilities for the Council area set out in their Annual Monitoring Report.

This Plan covers the period until 2038. For long term success it is essential that developments in the Plan area are reviewed against the Plan's Objectives and Policies.

Three Parishes Council will monitor the delivery of its policies and work to ensure that benefits to the communities within the Parishes are achieved.

Each agenda for the Parish Council meetings will include a 'Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan' which will ensure that the item is continually reviewed and reported upon during the Plans lifecycle.

On the anniversary of the adoption of the Plan, the Three Parishes will assess the impact of the Plan during the previous year and discuss the implementation of the Plan for the forthcoming year, taking into consideration any significant changes that may have come about as a result of the plans adoption. Any matters or problems will be raised by the Three Parishes and brought to the attention of the Borough Council, this will then be used as part of their contribution to the Annual Monitoring Report produced by Shropshire Council.

In 2027, 2032 and 2037, there will be thorough five year reviews of progress by a recruited community-based steering group. The purpose of these more comprehensive reviews will be to hold the Three Parishes to account by assessing how / whether the 'Objectives' are being achieved. Continued confidence in the Plan for the next Plan period will depend upon ensuring that all current and relevant information is taken into account. Each five year review will be assessed along with the combined Annual Monitoring Reports, and their results will inform any decision on the need for a 'Full Formal Review'. If there is a need for a Full Formal Review, up-to-date data on Housing Needs Survey, Parish Profile, Census results etc. will be used.

In 2038, the Steering Group will be re-informed to undertake a Full Formal Review to decide on the need for a subsequent 15 year Plan, and to oversee the development of this new Plan if required. This should coincide with work at Shropshire Council.

In conjunction, Shropshire Council will undertake its statutory role and continue to monitor Neighbourhood Plans as part of its monitoring framework.

The Three Parishes may be best placed to monitor the progress of certain elements of the Neighbourhood Plan; the division of responsibility will be agreed with Shropshire Council. This might mean that Shropshire Council leads on monitoring the strategic delivery of housing while the Three Parishes monitors local delivery. Monitoring arrangements are to be recorded in a *Memorandum of Understanding*⁴ between the two authorities.

The Three Parishes monitoring could take the form of a spreadsheet listing all planning applications and decisions made on them. It should be possible to see the extent to which the Neighbourhood Plan has been successful in influencing planning and development decisions by recording which policies are being used in decision making and the outcomes. Hence, we should be able to access how well

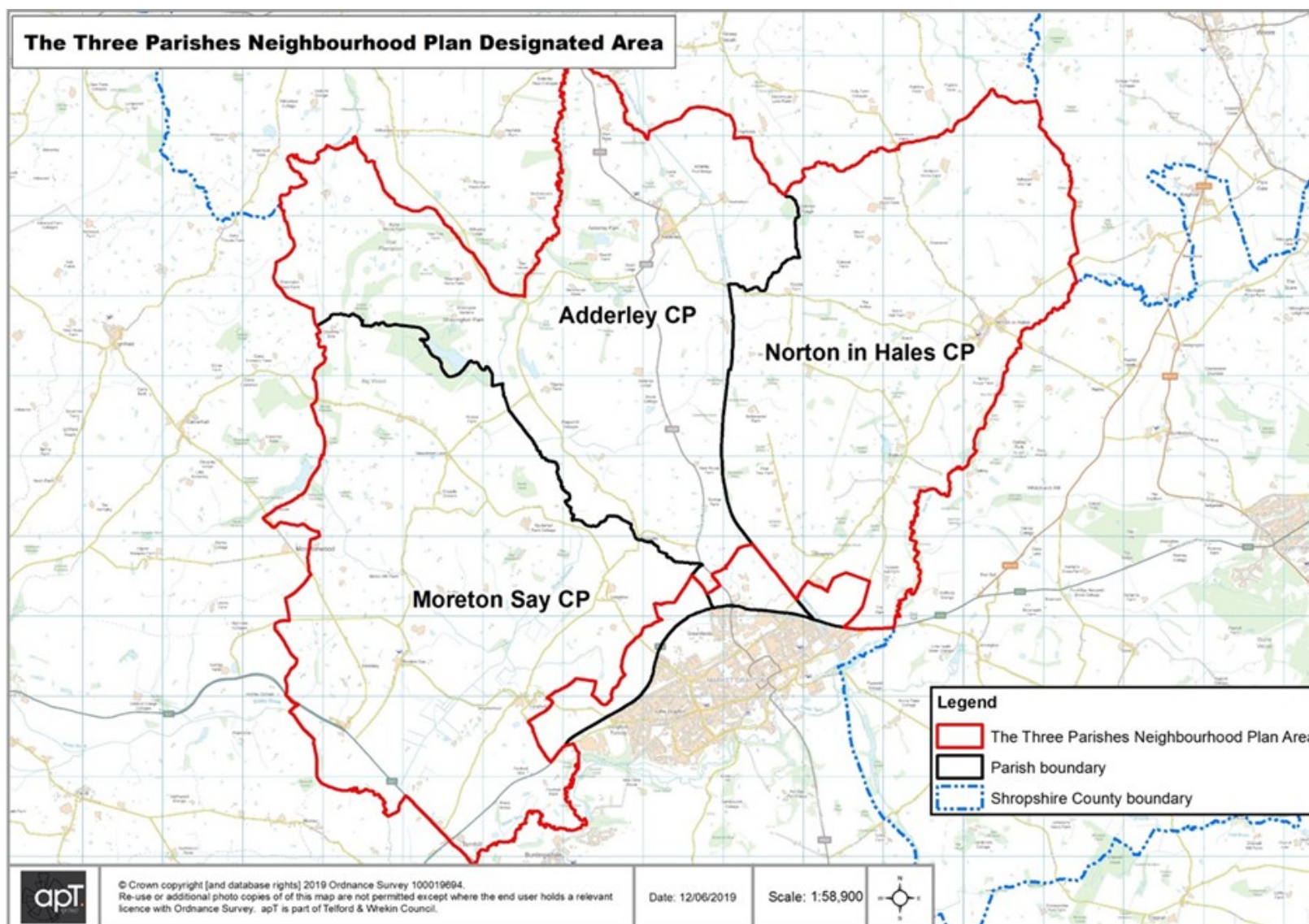
⁴ An agreement between two or more parties outlined in a formal document. It is not legally binding but signals the willingness of the parties to move forward with a contract.

policies are providing the expected outcomes. Findings from this should be shared with other interested parties to inform future Plans.

Table XX Example of Policy Monitoring

Policy	No. of times used	Decision in accordance	Decision against policy	Commentary

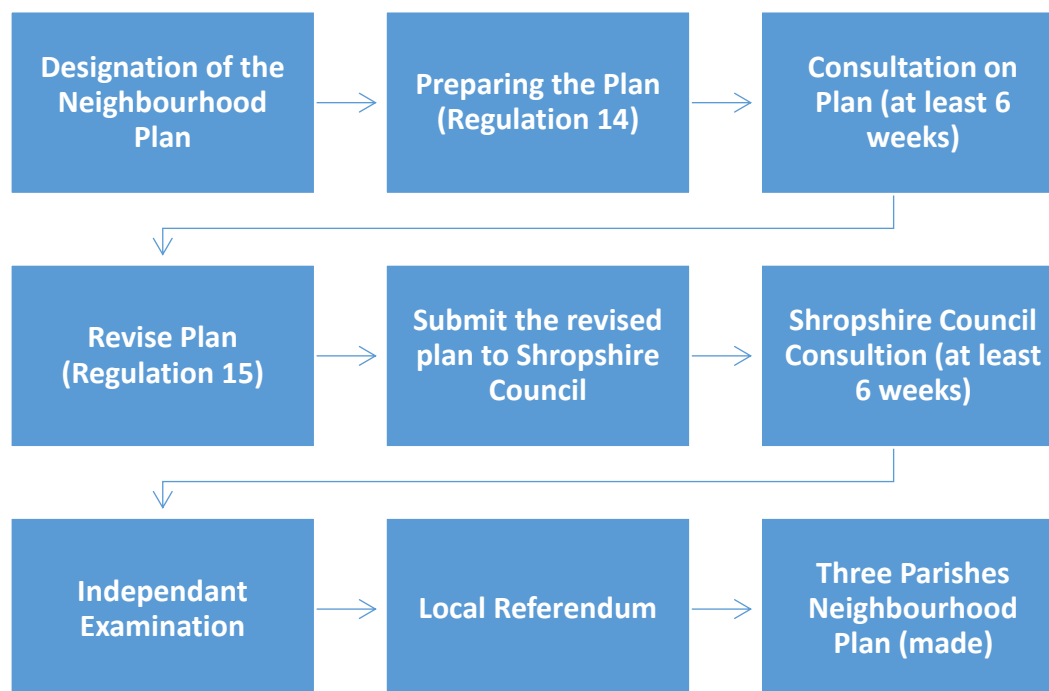
Appendix 1 Neighbourhood Plan Boundary



Appendix 2 Process of Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plans have to be prepared in a manner that is appropriate to the procedure set out by the Government. The table set out below briefly overviews these processes. Beginning from the designation of the Neighbourhood area as has been described above.

The Neighbourhood Plan Process



In accordance with Regulation 14, a six week consultation of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 was carried out with the Three Parishes residents, businesses and consultative bodies. The point of this consultation period was to give people the opportunity to provide feedback on the first draft of the plan.

A further six-week consultation (Regulation 16) by Shropshire Council will take place once the revised plan is submitted under Regulation 15 (the current stage) where alongside the plan a Basic Conditions Statement, Consultation Statement, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment will also be submitted.

The Shropshire Local Plan is currently under review and is undergoing Independent Examination. This will likely result in changes through required modifications by the Inspector. In this instance, the Three Parishes will consider the implications of these likely changes within this Regulation 15 submission, as well considering the representations received during the 6 week (Regulation 16) consultation stage. As a result of the Local Plan Examination the Neighbourhood Plan may need to be amended so that it complies with any relevant modifications to Shropshire Council's Local Plan.

The Plan, its evidence base and consultation responses, will then be submitted by Shropshire Council for Independent Examination and the process will culminate in a local referendum on whether the plan should be made part of the Statutory Development Plan for Shropshire. If the result of the referendum is positive the Plan will pass through one final Cabinet Meeting to finalise the Plan as 'made'.

At this point the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan will be part of the Shropshire Statutory Development Plan. Policies within this Neighbourhood Plan will reflect the aspirations of the majority of people in the Three Parishes who have all had an opportunity to play a part in shaping the future of their parishes.

Appendix 3 National Heritage List for the Three Parishes

Name and Location	Date	Notes	Grades
Adderley			
Shavington Wood Farmhouse	1536	A farmhouse that has been altered and extended, the original part is timber framed with plastered and painted infill. The 18th and 19th-century extensions are in brick, and the house has a tiled roof, one storey and an attic. The entrance front has three gabled dormers, a doorway with a moulded architrave, and a timber framed porch. Most windows are casements, and the right gable is slightly jettied with a moulded bressumer.	II
Barn, Shavington Wood Farm	c.1600	The barn is timber framed with weatherboarding, and it has been partly rebuilt with red brick nogging. The left wall has been rebuilt in brick, and the barn has a corrugated iron roof. It contains doors, loft doors and lozenge-shaped vents	II
St Peter's Church	1635 – 37	The oldest part of the church is the north transept, the tower dates back to 1712, and the rest of the church was rebuilt in 1801. The church is built in sandstone and has slate roofs. It has a cruciform plan, consisting of a nave, north and south transepts, a chancel and a west tower. The chancel and south transept have apsidal ends. The tower has two stages, with Doric pilasters, a moulded cornice, and a plain parapet. The north transept has an embattled parapet with crocketed pinnacles. The church has been divided internally, the nave being used as a parish church, and the rest of the church being under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.	I
Stable block, Shavington Gardens	c. 1685	The stable block was extended at the rear in the 19th century, forming a courtyard plan. It is in red brick with grey sandstone dressings, chamfered quoins, a moulded eaves cornice, and a hipped slate roof. There are two storeys, and the east front has seven bays. In the centre is a round-arched carriageway with rusticated surround, flanked by segmental-arched openings. At the top is an open triangular pediment containing a clock face in the tympanum. On the roof is an octagonal wooden cupola with fluted Greek Doric columns, a moulded cornice, and a lead dome with a weathervane.	II
Ice House, Pool House	18 th century	The ice house is in the grounds of Pool House. It consists of an entrance passage in red brick with a barrel vaulted roof that leads to a domed central chamber.	II
Sundial	18 th century	The sundial stands in a triangle of grass to the north of St Peter's Church. It is in red sandstone, and has a base of two steps, a tapered square shaft with chamfered corners, a cubic dial block with wrought-iron gnomons, and a globe finial	II
Mounting block	1774	The mounting block is to the north of St Peter's Church. It is in sandstone and consists of four steps	II
Estate bridge	Late 18 th century	The bridge is in Shavington Park, and carries an estate track over the River Duckow. It is in sandstone, and consists of two segmental arches with round-topped	II

		semicircular cutwaters and flanking pilaster buttresses. The parapet has a moulded string course and square end piers with globe finials. Approaching the bridge are quadrant wing walls.	
Shavington Bridge (northwestern)	Late 18th century	One of a pair of bridges carrying a road over the River Duckow. It is in grey sandstone, and consists of two segmental arches with round-topped circular cutwaters and flanking pilaster buttresses. The parapet has a moulded string course and square end piers with globe finials. Approaching the bridge are quadrant wing walls.	II
Shavington Bridge (southeastern)	Late 18th century	One of a pair of bridges carrying a road over the River Duckow. It is in red sandstone, and consists of a single segmental arch with flanking pilaster buttresses. The parapet has a moulded string course and square end piers. Approaching the bridge are quadrant wing walls.	II
Former stable block, Adderley Hall Farm	c.1787 – 88	The former stable block is in red brick with dressings in grey sandstone and a hipped slate roof. It has two storeys and consists of four ranges around a square courtyard. The main front on the west has eleven bays. There is a central elliptical-headed carriageway above which is a pediment with a moulded cornice and a clock in the tympanum. On the roof is a square wooden bellcote with a lead cap, a globe finial and a weathervane. The windows are sashes, some of which have been blocked.	II
Church Farmhouse	c. 1790	The farmhouse is in red brick on a plinth, with a dentil eaves cornice and a hipped tile roof. There are three storeys and a basement, and a symmetrical front of five bays, the central three bays projecting forward under a pediment. There is a central round-headed doorway with a fanlight, and the windows are casements.	II
Bridge No. 67 (Bettoncoppice Bridge)	c. 1830	An accommodation and roving bridge crossing the Shropshire Union Canal, it is in sandstone, and consists of a single elliptical arch with a hump back deck. The bridge has voussoirs, a flush keystone, a chamfered string course, and a parapet with rounded coping and a square end pier to the north. The abutments are slightly battered and curved, and the towpath and accommodation part of the bridge are divided by a stone wall.	II
Bridge No. 68 (Adderley Lees Bridge)	c. 1830	An accommodation bridge carrying a track over the Shropshire Union Canal, it is in sandstone, and consists of a single elliptical arch with a hump back deck. The bridge has voussoirs, a raised keystone, a chamfered string course, and a parapet with square end piers and rounded coping. The abutments are battered and curved, and there are cast iron corner posts.	II
Bridge No. 69 (Adderley Wharf Bridge)	c. 1830	The bridge carries a road over the Shropshire Union Canal, it is in sandstone, and consists of a single elliptical arch. The bridge has voussoirs, a flush keystone, a chamfered string course, and a parapet with square end piers and rounded coping. The abutments are battered and curved, and there are cast iron corner posts.	II
Bridge No. 70 (Wems Bridge)	c. 1830	An accommodation bridge carrying a track over the Shropshire Union Canal, it is in red brick with dressings	II

		in blue brick, and consists of a single elliptical arch with a hump back deck. The bridge has a chamfered string course, and a parapet with square end piers and rounded stone coping. The abutments are slightly battered and curved, and there are cast iron corner posts.	
Bridge No. 71 (Massey's Bridge)	c. 1830	An accommodation bridge carrying a track over the Shropshire Union Canal, it is in red brick with dressings in blue brick, and consists of a single elliptical arch with a hump back deck. The bridge has a chamfered string course, and a parapet with square end piers and rounded stone coping. The abutments are slightly battered and curved, and there are cast iron corner posts.	II
Bridge No. 72 (Hawksmoor Bridge)	c. 1830	The bridge carries Rectory Lane over the Shropshire Union Canal, it is in red brick with dressings in blue brick, and consists of a single elliptical arch with a hump back deck. The bridge has a chamfered string course, and a parapet with square end piers and rounded stone coping. The abutments are slightly battered and curved, and there are cast iron corner posts.	II
Bridge No. 73 (Adderley Pool Bridge)	c. 1830	An accommodation bridge carrying a track over the Shropshire Union Canal, it is in red brick with dressings in blue brick, and consists of a single elliptical arch with a hump back deck. The bridge has a chamfered string course, and a parapet with square end piers and rounded stone coping. The abutments are slightly battered and curved, and there are cast iron corner posts.	II
Milepost near Bridge No. 70	c. 1830	The milepost is on the towpath of the Shropshire Union Canal to the north of bridge no. 70. It is in cast iron, and consists of a cylindrical round-topped post carrying three convex plates indicating the distances in miles to Nantwich, Autherley Junction and Norbury Junction.	II
Milepost near Bridge No. 73	c. 1830	The milepost is on the towpath of the Shropshire Union Canal to the south of bridge no. 73. It is in cast iron, and consists of a cylindrical round-topped post carrying three convex plates indicating the distances in miles to Nantwich, Autherley Junction and Norbury Junction.	II
No. 1 Tittenley Lodge	1885	One of a pair of entrance lodges to Shavington Park designed by Norman Shaw. It is in orange brick with sandstone dressings, chamfered quoins, a moulded dentil eaves cornice, and a lead pyramidal roof. The chimney is in the centre of the roof, and has quoins, stone coping and globe finials on the corners. The lodge has a square plan and two storeys. Steps with low flanking walls lead up to the central doorway that has a porch on supports, and there is a square window to the right. In the returns are Venetian windows, and the upper floor contains a Diocletian window on each front. At the rear is a walled garden enclosure.	II
Retaining wall southeast of No. 1 Tittenley Lodge	1885	The wall is in red brick with sandstone dressings and chamfered stone coping. It has a quadrant plan, and square end piers with recessed panels and moulded stone caps with globe finials.	II

No. 2 Tittenley Lodge	1885	One of a pair of entrance lodges to Shavington Park designed by Norman Shaw. It is in orange brick with sandstone dressings, chamfered quoins, a moulded dentil eaves cornice, and a lead pyramidal roof. The chimney is in the centre of the roof, and has quoins, stone coping and globe finials on the corners. The lodge has a square plan and two storeys. Steps with low flanking walls lead up to the central doorway that has a porch on supports, and there is a square window to the left. In the returns are Venetian windows, and the upper floor contains a Diocletian window on each front. At the rear is a walled garden enclosure.	II
Retaining wall southwest of No. 2 Tittenley Lodge	1885	The wall is in red brick with sandstone dressings and chamfered stone coping. It has a quadrant plan, and square end piers with recessed panels and moulded stone caps with globe finials.	II
7 and 8 Shavington Park	c.1903	A pair of estate cottages in red brick with tile-hung gables and attics, and a tiled roof, hipped at the rear. They have one storey and attics, a U-shaped plan with a front face of four bays, rear wings and a one-storey service block between them. The porches are pebbledashed, the gables have plain bargeboards, the windows are casements, and in the upper floor are dormers.	II
Norton In Hales			
St Chad's Church and archway	13 th century	The oldest part of the church is the chancel, the tower dates from the late 14th century, most of the church was restored and rebuilt in 1864–65, and the north transept and archway were added in 1872. The church is built in sandstone with slate roofs, and consists of a nave with a clerestory, north and south aisles, a north baptistry, a north transept with an attached archway, a chancel with a north vestry, and a west tower. The tower has three stages, diagonal buttresses, a clock face on the south front, gargoyles, and an embattled parapet with crocketed corner pinnacles.	II*
Churchyard cross	15 th or 16 th century	The cross is in the churchyard of St Chad's Church. It is in red sandstone, and has a square base and an octagonal shaft, surmounted by a 19th-century cast iron cross.	II
Betton Old Hall	Late 16 th century	A timber framed house with plaster infill on a brick plinth with a tile roof, that has been extended in brick with applied timbers. The central bay is gabled and has two storeys and an attic, and is flanked by single-story wings. The upper floor of the central bay is jettied and has a moulded bressumer, the gable is also jettied and has plain bargeboards and a finial. The windows are casements.	II
Ridgwardine Manor	Late 16 th or early 17 th century	The farmhouse has been remodelled and extended. Originally timber framed, it has been largely encased and extended in red brick, and has a tile roof. There are two storeys and an attic, and the house consists of a one-bay range, with a one-bay gabled cross-wing on the left, a projecting two-bay gabled cross-wing on the right, and a further extension to the left. The gables have plain bargeboards and finials, the doorway has a	II

		moulded surround and a gabled porch, and the windows are casements.	
Bellaport Old Hall	Early 17 th century	Part of a large house on a moated site that was largely demolished in the 19th century. It is in stone and red brick, partly rendered, and with a tile roof. It has an L-shaped plan, with a two-storey range, and a single-storey wing. The doorway has a chamfered surround, and the windows are mullioned.	II
Old font	17 th century	The former font is in the churchyard of St Chad's Church. It is in grey sandstone, and has a circular stem, and a circular bowl with a moulded bottom edge.	II
Barn south of Brand Hall	Mid 17 th century	The barn is timber framed with red brick nogging on a red brick plinth, partly rebuilt and extended in red brick and with a tile roof. It has three bays, with an extension of half a bay at each end, and there is a central cart entrance.	II
Brand Hall	c. 1700	A country house with a 17th-century core, that was later extended. It is in red brick with grey sandstone dressings, and some timber framing with plaster infill at the rear, and with tile roofs. It is on a chamfered plinth, with chamfered quoins, a moulded cornice, and a coped parapet with sections of balustrading. The house has two storeys and an attic, with a front of seven bays, flanked by two-storey wings, and with a rear wing. In the middle three bays are unfluted Doric pilasters, and an entablature with a triangular pediment containing a coat of arms between loops of drapery.	II*
Archway southeast of Brand Hall (north)	c.1700	The archway is in red brick with grey sandstone dressings. It consists of an elliptical arch that has piers with plinths, chamfered quoins, and impost bands, and on the arch is an open triangular pediment.	II*
Archway southeast of Brand Hall (south)	c. 1700	The archway is in red brick with grey sandstone dressings. It consists of an elliptical arch that has piers with plinths, chamfered quoins, and impost bands, and on the arch is an open triangular pediment.	II*
Ha-ha southeast of Brand Hall	Early 18th century	The ha-ha is at the end of the lawn in front of the hall and is in red sandstone with coping blocks. It is about 60 metres (200 ft) long and 1 metre (3 ft 3 in) high, and is ramped down at the ends where there are globe finials.	II*
Stable block southeast of Brand Hall	Early 18th century	The stable block is in red brick with grey sandstone dressings on a brick plinth with a chamfered sandstone top. There is a string course, and a hipped tile roof with a triangular pediment and a clock face in the tympanum. The block has two storeys and three bays. In the centre is a blocked round-headed archway, and above is an octagonal wooden cupola with a moulded base, square piers, a moulded cornice, and an ogee lead cap with a globe finial and weathervane.	II
Tunstall Hall	c. 1732	A country house in red brick with sandstone dressings on a chamfered stone plinth, with two string courses, a moulded cornice and parapet, and a two-span hipped tile roof. There are three storeys, a front of nine bays and sides of four bays. The central doorway in the west front has a moulded architrave, pilaster strips, a frieze,	II*

		and a segmental pediment on consoles. The windows are sashes with moulded architraves, those in the ground floor with triangular pediments. In the east front is a doorway with a Gibbs surround and a triangular pediment, and in the south front is a full-height, five-sided bay window.	
Betton House	Mid to late 18 th century	A red brick house with grey sandstone dressings on a stone plinth, with a moulded cornice and a hipped slate roof. There are three storeys and seven bays. The outer bays contain full-height bow windows with conical roofs. The central doorway has Ionic three-quarter columns, a radial fanlight, a fluted frieze, and an open triangular pediment. The windows are sashes; those in the middle bay have moulded architraves, and in the middle floor they have balustrading beneath, a frieze with paterae and a moulded cornice.	II
Chest tomb	Late 18th century	The chest tomb is in the churchyard of St Chad's Church. It is in sandstone, and has a moulded plinth, shaped corner balusters, and a moulded cornice to a flat top. There are recessed circular side and end panels, and the inscription is illegible.	II
Shifford's Bridge	Early 19th century	The bridge carries the A53 road over the River Tern. It is in sandstone, and consists of a single wide segmental arch. The bridge has a projecting keystone on the north side, a flat string course, and curved ends on the south side.	II
Victoria Bridge	1827–30	Bridge No. 65 carries Maer Lane over the Shropshire Union Canal. It is in stone with some brick, and consists of a single elliptical arch. The bridge has voussoirs, a keystone, a band, a slightly cambered parapet with coping, and square piers, also with coping.	II
Bettonwood Bridge	c. 1830	Bridge No. 66 is an accommodation bridge over the Shropshire Union Canal. It is in sandstone, and consists of a single elliptical arch. The bridge is hump-backed, and has voussoirs, a flush keystone, a chamfered string course, a parapet with rounded coping, and square end piers.	II
Milepost south of Bridge No. 66	c. 1830	The milepost is on the towpath of the Shropshire Union Canal. It is in cast iron, and consists of a cylindrical round-topped post with curved rectangular plates. The plates are inscribed with the distances in miles to Autherley Junction, Nantwich, and Norbury Junction.	II
Milepost south of Bridge No. 67	c. 1830	The milepost is on the towpath of the Shropshire Union Canal. It is in cast iron, and consists of a cylindrical round-topped post with curved rectangular plates. The plates are inscribed with the distances in miles to Autherley Junction, Nantwich, and Norbury Junction.	II
Betton Hall Farmhouse and farm buildings	Mid 19th century	A model farm, it was extended in the 20th century. The farmhouse is in red brick on a stone plinth and has a dentilled eaves cornice, and a tile roof, two storeys, a double-depth plan, and four bays. Above the door is a fanlight, and the windows are sashes. The farm buildings are in red brick with dressings in blue brick and limestone, and most roofs are tiled. Adjoining the house is a single-storey range. The other buildings are	II

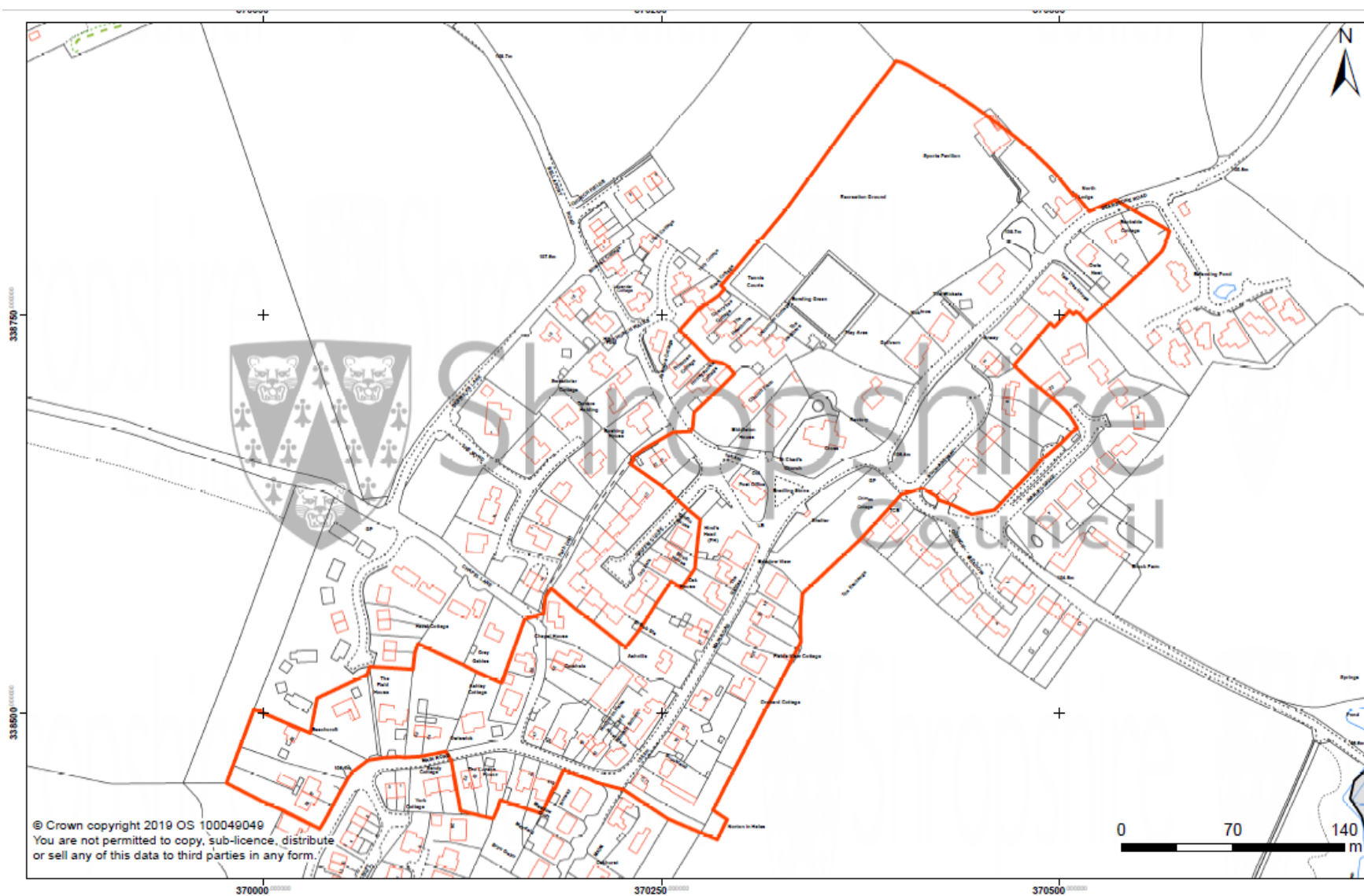
		separate and form a T-shaped plan; they include loose-box stables, cow houses and a milking parlour.	
Moreton Say			
Oldfields Farmhouse	Early 15th century	The farmhouse was altered and extended in the 17th and 19th centuries. It is timber framed with cruck construction, the rebuilding and extensions are in brick and the roof is tiled. The original part has one storey and an attic, and consists of a quasi-aisled hall with three bays, and there is a rebuilt cross-wing to the southeast and a later extension to the southwest, both with two storeys. The windows are casements, and there are two small gabled eaves dormers. Inside is a central base cruck truss.	II*
Glynde Cottage	16th century	The house was later altered and extended. The original part is timber framed with cruck construction and brick nogging on a brick plinth, and with a tile roof. There are two storeys, two bays, and a single-storey extension to the right. The doorway has a gabled porch, and the windows are casements.	II
Bletchley Manor	Late 16th century	The farmhouse was altered and extended in the 19th century. The original part is timber framed and rendered, and the rebuilding and refacing are in brick, with applied timber and painting to resemble timber framing. The farmhouse has a three-span tile roof with three gables and three bays at the front. The original part has two storeys and an attic, and the extension has two storeys. There is a central doorway with a moulded architrave and a timber-framed gabled porch. The windows are cross-windows, and there is a sash window in the extension.	II
Holly Cottage	Late 16 th century	The cottage was altered and extended in the 19th and 20th centuries. The original part is timber framed with plaster infill, it has been partly rebuilt and underbuilt in brick, and the roof is tiled. There is one storey and an attic, two bays, and a one-storey lean-to at each end. The windows are casements, and at the rear are a lean-to porch and gabled eaves dormers.	II
The Old Smithy	1600	Alterations and additions were made later to the cottage, which is timber framed with brick nogging on a rendered plinth, the extensions are in brick, and the roof is tiled. There are two storeys, originally with two bays and later extensions. There are two gabled porches, and the windows are casements	II
The Royal Oak Farmhouse	c. 1600	The farmhouse, at one time an inn, was extended in the 19th century. It is timber framed with plaster infill on a sandstone plinth, the extension is in brick, and the roof is tiled. There is one storey and an attic, and an H-shaped plan, with a central range of one bay, cross-wings of two bays each, and a single bay in the angle at the rear. The cross-wings have jettied upper floors with moulded bressumers on scrolled brackets, and the gables are also jettied with decorative bressumers. The windows are casements, and in the middle range is a large gabled dormer.	II
Longford Old Hall	Early 17th century	The farmhouse is timber framed with brick infill, underbuilding in brick, and a tile roof. There are two	II

		storeys and an attic, and an H-shaped plan, consisting of a central single-bay range, two gabled cross-wings, each with two bays, and a single-storey lean-to at the rear. The doorway has a chamfered surround, the windows are casements, and there is a central gabled full dormer.	
Rhiews Farmhouse	Early to mid 17th century	The farmhouse, later a private house, has been altered and extended. It is timber framed with brick nogging on a brick plinth, and extended in brick painted to resemble timber framing, one gable end is rendered, and the roof is tiled. There are two storeys, two bays, an extension to the southeast, and a rear wing. The windows are casements, and there is a lean-to porch.	II
New Street Lane Farmhouse	17th century	The farmhouse was remodelled in the 18th century and extended in the 19th century. It is in red brick with a timber framed core, on a plinth, with quoins, a dentil eaves cornice, and a tile roof. The farmhouse is partly in one storey, and partly in two storeys with an attic, there are three bays, and a rear wing. The windows are casements, some with segmental heads, and some with Gothick arches, and there is a gabled porch.	II
Styche Hall	1762–66	A small country house designed by William Chambers, altered in 1796–98 by Joseph Bromfield, and altered again in about 1900. It is in brick with a hipped tile roof. There are three storeys and a basement, and a square plan with sides of seven and six bays. The central doorway has a moulded architrave, and a porch with fluted Corinthian pilasters, an entablature, and a triangular pedimented gable. This is flanked by full-height canted bay windows, and the other windows are sashes.	II
Stychefields Residential Home and The Coach House	1763–66	Originally the stables and coach house for Styche Hall designed by William Chambers, they are in red brick with grey sandstone dressings, and have hipped tile roofs. The stables from an L-shaped plan around a courtyard with fronts of seven and five bays, with the former coach house in the southeast corner. There are two storeys, the windows are casements, and in the centre of each block is a window with a moulded architrave, a pulvinated frieze, and a moulded cornice. The round-arched entrance has a moulded architrave, flanking Tuscan pilasters and a full entablature. On the roof is a wooden cupola with a clock, a tented lead cap, and a weathervane.	II
Nobridge Farmhouse	Mid to late 18th century	The farmhouse, which incorporates a 17th-century core, is in red brick with a plat band and a tile roof with coped and parapeted gable ends. There are three storeys and five bays, a kitchen wing, and attached coach house and stables. The windows are sashes, and the doorway has pilasters, a frieze, a cornice, and a bracketed hood.	II
St Margaret's Church	1769	The oldest substantial part of the church is the tower, and the nave and chancel were added in 1788, incorporating a 12th-century core. The church was restored and the porch was added in 1900. The church is built in red brick with grey sandstone dressings, the	II*

		east end was rebuilt or refaced in red sandstone in 1900, and the roof is tiled. It consists of a nave and a chancel in one unit, a south porch, and a west tower. The tower has three stages and a low parapet with corner obelisks. Along the sides of the church are two tiers of round-headed windows, there is a string course, and quoins on the corners. The porch is gabled and has a Tudor arched entrance.	
Markham memorial	1778	The memorial is in the churchyard of St Margaret's Church, and is to the memory of John James Markham Bart. It is a pedestal tomb in grey sandstone with a large sandstone base. The tomb has a moulded plinth, square panels, a moulded cornice, a hollow chamfered top, and an ovoid finial.	II
Milepost near Fordhall Cottages	Early to mid 19th century	The milepost is on the southeast side of the A53 road. It is in cast iron, and has a triangular section with a chamfered top. The milepost is inscribed with the distances in miles to "SALOP" (Shrewsbury) and to "DRAYTON" (Market Drayton).	II
Granary, Oldfields Farm	Early to mid 19th century	The granary, which incorporates some 14th-century material, is timber framed with red brick nogging on a red sandstone plinth, the rear wall is rebuilt in brick, and the roof is tiled. There is one storey and a loft, three bays, and a one-storey brick extension to the left. The granary contains doorways and loft openings, and in the extension are a window and a stable door, both with segmental heads.	II
Pump, Oldfields Farmhouse	Mid to late 19th century	The pump is in cast iron, and has a circular shaft with moulded rings and spout, a fluted top, a fluted domed cap, and a handle with winding mechanism. There is also a stone trough.	II
Pool Cottage	1872	An estate cottage by William Eden Nesfield. It is timber framed with plaster infill on a red brick plinth, and in brick painted to resemble timber framing. The roof is tiled and partly hipped, the gables are tile-hung, and there are globe finials on the apices. There is one storey and an attic and an irregular T-shaped plan. The windows are mullioned and transomed, and other features include canted bay windows, jettied attics with moulded bressumers, a polygonal-arched entrance, and an attic oriel window.	II
Outbuilding, Pool Cottage	c. 1872	The outbuilding is in red brick with a dentil eaves cornice and a hipped tile roof. It has one storey, a casement window, and a pair of segmental-headed doors.	II
Tern Hill House Farmhouse	Late 19 th century	The farmhouse is in red brick with a plat band and a dentil eaves cornice, and a hipped slate roof. There are three storeys, three bays, and a single-storey rear wing. The central doorway has unfluted attached Doric columns and an entablature, and the windows are sashes.	II
The Haven	1876	An estate cottage by William Eden Nesfield. It is timber framed with plaster infill on a red brick plinth, and in brick painted to resemble timber framing. The roof is tiled and partly hipped, the gables are tile-hung, and there are globe finials on the apices. There is one	II

		storey and an attic and an irregular T-shaped plan. The windows are mullioned and transomed, and other features include canted bay windows, jettied attics with moulded bressumers, a polygonal-arched entrance, and an attic oriel window.	
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Appendix 4: Norton In Hales Conservation Area



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