



Committee and Date

Council

14 May 2026

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2026

**In the The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.00 am - 3.35 pm**

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Councillors Duncan Borrowman (Chair) and Heather Kidd (Leader), Gary Groves (Vice-Chair), Alex Wagner (Deputy Leader), Sho Abdul, Caroline Bagnall, Elizabeth Barker, Bernie Bentick, Neil Bentley, Ed Bird, Jeremy Blandford, Andy Boddington, Thomas Clayton, Susan Coleman, Rachel Connolly, Tom Dainty, Jamie Daniels, Rosemary Dartnall, Andy Davis, Julian Dean, Joshua Dickin, Mandy Duncan, Greg Ebbs, Susan Eden, Donna Edmunds, Brian Evans, Roger Evans, Adam Fejfer, Rhys Gratton, Andy Hall, Harry Hancock-Davies, Nick Hignett, Alan Holford, George Hollyhead, Ruth Houghton, Dawn Husemann, Peter Husemann, Benedict Jephcott, Robert Jones, Duncan Kerr, Christopher Lemon, Nigel Lumby, Brendan Mallon, Sarah Marston, David Minnery, Vicky Moore, Mark Morris, Alan Mosley, Chris Naylor, James Owen, Mark Owen, Wendy Owen, Vivienne Parry, Ed Potter, Rosie Radford, Sharon Ritchie-Simmons, Carl Rowley, Charles Shackerley-Bennett, Colin Stanford, Jon Tandy, Colin Taylor, Dan Thomas, David Vasmer, Beverley Waite, David Walker, Sam Walmsley and Rob Wilson

70 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Davies, Pamela Davies, Craig Emery, Kate Halliday, Malcolm Myles Hook, Terri Trickett and Alison Williams.

71 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

In respect of agenda items 14 and 15 Cllr Duncan Kerr declared a pecuniary interest as he was a board member of STAR Housing and stated that he would leave the room during discussion and voting on these items.

In respect of agenda items 14 and 15 Cllr Mark Owen declared a pecuniary interest as he was a board member of STAR Housing and stated that he would leave the room during discussion and voting on these items.

Councillor Mark Morris declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 10. He made the declaration as soon as it became apparent and left the room .

72 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2025, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

73 Announcements

Chairman's Engagements

The Chairman referred Members to the list of official engagements carried out by himself since the last meeting of the Council on 11 December 2025, which had been circulated by email prior to the meeting.

74 Public Questions

The Chair advised that 6 questions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 14.

Question from Tim Ashton regarding aligning the DMP with reviving the "Grand Tour of England. By way of supplementary Mr Ashton advised that the matter may shortly be discussed in parliament and asked the Portfolio Holder to consider how the Council could support a response.

Question from Adrian Tacchi regarding planning breaches at Sovereign Park Shrewsbury. In response to a question regarding specific breaches the Portfolio Holder agreed to discuss these with Officers and report back to Mr Tacchi, in writing.

Question from David Kilby regarding the replacement swimming pool in Shrewsbury (Read by The Service Director – Legal, Governance and Planning)

Question from John Palmer regarding an inquiry into the management of the North West Relief Road project. There was no supplementary question

Question from Andrew Sceats regarding Council receipts from Cornovii. In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder confirmed that Cornovii did build a range of types of dwellings, and that building homes in excess of the standards required provide some sort of future proofing and guaranteed that improvements may not be needed in the future.

Question from Caroline Price regarding infrastructure evidence for planning applications (Read by The Service Director – Legal, Governance and Planning)

The full questions and responses can be found here: - [\(Public Pack\)Responses to Public and Member Questions Agenda Supplement for Council, 26/02/2026 10:00](#)

75 Questions from Members

The Chair advised that 6 questions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15

Question from Councillor Rosemary Dartnall regarding spending on the North West Relief Road. By way of supplementary question Councillor Dartnall asked how did the Council ascertain that they were getting best value for money on the contract with WSP and Keir. The Portfolio Holder replied that the contracts were negotiated and valued independently but that he felt that the main issue was the way the spending on the project was managed and how this can be improved for the future.

Question from Councillor Chris Lemon regarding delays in the adoption of new housing developments. By way of supplementary question Councillor Lemon asked whether it would be possible to apply parking restrictions to overcome the problems being experienced even though the roads had not been adopted. The Portfolio Holder agreed to speak with Officers and report back to Councillor Lemon.

Question from Councillor Elizabeth Barker regarding the governments pilot scheme to build council-owned housing specifically for asylum seekers. In response to a supplementary question the Leader reiterated that there was no current proposal for the Council to participate in the pilot scheme and that any future proposal would be considered in a transparent way through the democratic process

Question from Councillor Harry Hancock-Davies regarding the collection of council tax arrears. In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder paid tribute to the work that The Revenue and Benefits team were doing and stated that the service review that had been carried out was done internally so apart from officer time there was little cost.

Question from Councillor Chris Naylor regarding the prioritisation of pot hole repairs. In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder asked Councillor Naylor to send him details of specific problems that he had and he would discuss them with Officers and get back to him

Question from Councillor Susan Coleman regarding the Council forward plan. By way of supplementary question Councillor Coleman asked whether the conditions attached to the EFS would affect the forward plan. The Leader advised that the plans were all in place.

The full questions and responses can be found here [\(Public Pack\)Responses to Public and Member Questions Agenda Supplement for Council, 26/02/2026 10:00](#)

76 Appointment of Interim Chief Financial Officer

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Duncan Whitfield be appointed as Interim Chief Financial Officer in accordance with section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972

77 Fees and Charges Pricing Policy

It was proposed by Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance, and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve and adopt the Fees and Charges Policy for 2026/27 and incorporation into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and budget setting process in February 2026

78 Fees and Charges 2026/27

It was proposed by Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance, and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

With regard to specific queries raised by Members the Portfolio Holder stated that he would liaise with the relevant portfolio holders and respond to Members after the meeting

RESOLVED:

That Council

- A. Note the breakdown of the total income for 2025/26 and 2026/27 and in particular that the proposed 2026/27 charges for discretionary services represent £50.868m of the £104.981m of income derived from Fees and Charges.
- B. Approve the charges for 2026/27 as detailed in Appendix 3 to be implemented from 1 April 2026.
- C. To note that as previously agreed, any changes to fees and charges proposed by Shropshire Community Leisure Trust Ltd. in relation to the outsourced leisure facilities will only be referred to Cabinet and Council for approval if the proposed increases exceed Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the preceding November.
- D. Note that the fees chargeable for hackney carriage, private hire vehicle and operator's licences, and drivers' licences are currently under consultation, with the proposed new charges to take effect from 9 February 2026.

- E. Note that the proposed new charges for Adult Social Care Deferred Payment Policy, are detailed in a separate report which is also being considered at this meeting.
- F. Note that the fees and charges set in 2026/27 reflect the implementation of the Fees and Charges Pricing Policy which is also being considered at this meeting.
- G. Agree to revise housing rents as follows (subject to restrictions or exemptions identified in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill):
 - G(i). Social Housing and Affordable rents for 2026/27 are increased by 4.8% from 6th April 2026.
 - G(ii) Shared Ownership rents continue to be calculated at 2.75% of the landlord's share at the time of purchase. From the following April, rents are reviewed annually in line with the terms set out in the lease. As additional shares in the property are purchased, rent will decrease proportionally, based on the original property value.
 - G(iii) Service charges will be calculated based on actual cost plus a 15% management and admin fee (excluding sewage), with changes in the way these are calculated following an in-depth service charge review.

79 Draft 2026/27 General Fund budgets and Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 - 2030/31

It was proposed by Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance and seconded by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Members were able to ask questions and seek clarification from the Interim Chief Financial Officer

Members asked that communications be done to alert members of the public to the support available for those struggling with payments.

On being put to a recorded vote with 44 Members voting for, 21 against and 1 abstention as follows:

FOR

Councillors Abdul, Bagnall, Bentick, Bently, Blandford, Borrowman, Connolly, Dainty, Daniels, Dartnall, Davis, Dean, Dicken, Ebbs, R Evans, A Fejfer, Gratton, Groves, Hall, Holford, Houghton, Jephcott, Jones, Kerr, Kidd, Marston, Minnery, Moore, Morris, Mosley, Naylor, J Owen, M Owen, W Owen, Parry, Radford, Tandy, Taylor, Vasmer, Wagner, Waite, Walker, Walmsley and Wilson.

Against

Councillors Barker, Bird, Clayton, Coleman, Duncan, Eden, Edmunds, B Evans, Hancock-Davies, Hignett, Hollyhead, D Husemann, P Husemann, Lumby, Mallon, Potter, Ritchie-Simmons, Rowley, Shackerley-Bennett, Stanford and Thomas

Abstention

Cllr Lemon

80 North West Relief Road

It was proposed by Councillor David Vasmer, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED

- A. That the North West Relief Road (DfT funded project) is formally cancelled.
- B. That the S151 officer be requested to make appropriate Capital Programme and accounting adjustments following the decision in paragraph A.

81 Treasury Strategy 2026/27

It was proposed by the Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED

That Full Council:-

- A. Approve, with any comments, the Treasury Strategy for 2026/27, set out in appendix 1 (parts 1-3).
- B. Approve, with any comments, the Investment Strategy, set out in Appendix 1 (part 4) in accordance with the DLUHC Guidance on Local Government Investments.
- C. Approve, with any comments, the Prudential Indicators, set out in Appendix 1 (part 5), in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003.
- D. Approve, with any comments, the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement, set out in Appendix 1 (part 6).

- E. Authorise the Section 151 Officer to exercise the borrowing powers contained in Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and to manage the Council's debt portfolio in accordance with the Treasury Strategy.
- F. Authorise the Section 151 Officer to use other Foreign Banks which meet MUFG Corporate Markets' creditworthiness policy as required

82 Report of the Shirehall Strategic Review - Council Task and Finish Group

It was proposed by Councillor Dawn Husemann, Chair of the Shirehall Strategic Review - Council Task And Finish Group and seconded by Councillor Rosemary Dartnall that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

It was proposed by The Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by Councillor Dawn Husemann that the report be referred to a special meeting of Cabinet for consideration. By way of amendment to this proposal Councillor Julian Dean proposed the addition of the following: - Council also recommends to Cabinet to work towards the recommendations within this report. On taking a vote the amendment was not supported.

RESOLVED

That the report of the Shirehall Strategic Review - Council Task and Finish Group be referred to a special meeting of cabinet for consideration

83 Social Housing Tenancy Agreement

It was proposed by Councillor James Owen, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure and seconded by Councillor Jeremy Blandford that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED

That Council:

1. Approve the adoption of the revised tenancy agreement, reflecting updated regulatory requirements and incorporating amendments made to ensure alignment with current industry standards, particularly within Section 3.4 (Repairs, Maintenance and Alterations).
2. Approve the transition from a 48-week to a 52-week rent charging model, aligning rent payments with Universal Credit and Housing Benefit cycles to improve tenant budgeting and financial resilience.
3. Approve the updated service charge schedule and annual review process, ensuring transparency and clarity for tenants regarding their obligations and entitlements

4. Approve the proposed implementation timeline, with the new tenancy agreement and rent model to take effect from April 2026.
5. Delegate authority to the Service Director – Communities and Customer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Leisure, to make any minor amendments to the proposed tenancy

84 Social Housing Rent and Service charges 2026

It was proposed by Councillor James Owen, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure and seconded by Councillor Jeremy Blandford that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED

1. Approve an increase to Social and Affordable rents of 4.8% from 6 April 2026, in line with Government rent policy
2. Approve the adoption of the Government's staged rent convergence mechanism — following the publication of the formal Government Direction setting out the statutory rules for implementation — which will allow:
 - an additional £1/week uplift from 2027/28, and an additional £2/week uplift from 2028/29.
3. Approve revised service charges for 2026/27, calculated on the basis of:
 - Actual cost of service delivery
 - Plus 15% management and administration fee (excluding sewage)
 - Over 52 weeks.
4. Approve the draft HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2026/27 as shown in Appendices 2 and 3.
5. Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer or Deputy and relevant Service Director of Communities & Customer, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to finalise rent and service charge implementation and issue statutory notifications.

85 Adult Social Care Deferred Payments Policy

It was proposed by Councillor Ruth Houghton, Portfolio Holder for Social Care and seconded by Councillor Sarah Marston that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That

3.1 Council approves the updated Deferred Payment Policy in Appendix 1;

3.2 Council notes the following main changes within the policy:

- Increased one-off setup fee from £610 to £750
- The introduction of an annual administration charge to reflect the work undertaken during the lifetime of the DPA in notifying interest rate changes and supplying statements;
- Introduce legal charges to reflect the work done in entering the DPA, registration at Land Registry and removing the charge once repaid.
- Maintain the application of interest from contract signing.
- Implement process improvements to reduce completion timelines and strengthen compliance

86 Motions

The following motion was received from Councillor Donna Edmunds and supported by Councillors Kate Halliday, Caroline Bagnall, Rosemary Dartnall and Alan Mosley

Amendment of Council Rules of Procedure on Submission Deadlines for Reports and Motions to Council

Council notes that:

1. Under section 11.6 of the Council Procedure Rules, reports are required to be made available with "sufficient time [...] afforded to members to consider the report and any associated papers."
2. Case law and sector guidance issued by bodies such as the Local Government Association establish that unreasonable delay in the production or publication of reports and decision records may undermine democratic accountability, effective scrutiny, and public confidence in local government.
3. Section 100B of the Local Government Act 1972 stipulates that copies of the agenda and associated reports must be made available to the public at least five clear days before meetings, and after having been made available to members. It further states that associated reports must be made available at the time an item is added to the agenda.
4. The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended by the Local Government (Openness of Local Government Bodies) Regulations 2014, reinforce the principle that local authority decision-making must be transparent, timely, and accessible.

5. Members are currently required to give 10 working days' notice in order to bring a motion to council under section 16.1 of the Council's Procedure Rules.

Council therefore resolves that:

1. The Council's Procedure Rules be amended to reflect that officers responsible for preparing reports following a Full Council and Committee meeting must ensure that such reports, including minutes and any associated recommendations or outcome summaries, are submitted to the Proper Officer and published within five clear working days of the date of the meeting, in line with section 100B of the Local Government Act 1972.
2. For the purposes of this motion, clear working days shall be those defined within section 1.14 of the Council's Procedure Rules: to exclude the day of receipt, Saturdays, Sundays, other days when the Council's offices are closed, and the day of the meeting itself.

Where exceptional circumstances prevent the submission of a report within the five clear working day period, the responsible officer shall provide a written explanation to the relevant Committee Chair, Group Leaders, and the Proper Officer, outlining the reasons for delay and an expected submission date;

And

The Speaker will be required to make known to the same, giving their reasoning, whether they accept the related item onto the agenda or wish to defer, as per item 11.6 of the Council's Procedure Rules.

3. Section 16.1 of the Council's Procedure Rules be amended from:

[...] must be delivered to the Chief Executive at least than 10 clear working days before the date of the meeting.

To

[...] must be delivered to the Chief Executive at least 5 clear working days before the date of the meeting.

Council further requests that:

1. A six-month review of compliance with these new requirements be presented to the appropriate committee to identify any barriers to delivery.

This was seconded by Councillor Rosemary Dartnall

In presenting her motion Councillor Edmunds pointed out that there was an erroring the resolution and that it should read "The Council's Procedure Rules be amended to reflect that officers responsible for preparing reports ahead of a Full Council and Committee" rather than "follow"

By way of amendment the Chair Councillor Duncan Barrowman proposed that the motion be referred to the Constitution Working Group for consideration prior to a report being brought back to Council and that he and Cllr Edmunds should also attend this meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Gary Groves.

On taking a vote the amendment was passed.

Motion received from Councillor Brendan Mallon and support by the Reform Group

Globally, the transition to 'Net Zero' energy systems is in a state of rapid collapse. No large economy is persisting with this and only a handful of lesser economies are still fully committed. The US is unequivocally out. Russia, India, most of Asia and South America were never really in (despite the Paris Agreement) and China simply lies.

China's wind and solar 'farms' are merely a shop front for the planet's primary manufacturer of that equipment. Meanwhile, they rapidly expand Coal and Nuclear use. China alone is 32% of global emissions (Our World in Data), more than the combined developed world. Chinese per capita emissions surpassed the UK in 2022 and are now already double the UK's, with no slowdown in the increase. China plus just the USA and India make up fully half of global emissions.

The latest domino to fall is Germany. Previous dependence on Russian gas and their abandonment of Nuclear makes Germany now heavily dependent on coal and lignite (14% - AG Enrgiebilanzen) and LNG and thus the EU's largest emitter at 22% of the total (EDGAR 2024 report). Unaffordable energy has resulted in large scale off-shoring of German heavy industry. Thus, Chancellor Merz's announcement to reverse their energy policies, maintaining Net Zero in name only.

What remains is a handful of smaller European economies plus Australia still pursuing Net Zero to a similar extent as the UK, with a combined output circa 7% of global emissions (Net Zero Tracker and EDGAR 2024). Canada nominally has Net Zero policies but, unlike the UK, continues with extensive hydrocarbon production. Clearly, 7% of Net Zero is little more than a rounding error. Thus, any further spending on Net Zero is an obvious waste of money.

A number of Councils around the country, including Labour-led Islington, have heavily curtailed or suspended Net Zero spending. In the context of our Financial Emergency, in order to reduce both capital and revenue spend, we move that the Council immediately suspend all Net Zero related spending, pending a review of value-for-money beyond clearly ineffectual reductions in CO2 emissions.

After a short debate Councillor R Evans proposed that the motion be put and on taking a vote the motion was not supported

Motion received from Councillor Carl Rowley and supported by the Reform Group

The Chairman advised that this motion had been withdrawn

87 Report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

It was proposed by Councillor Adam Fejfer that the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, be received and noted.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority be noted.

88 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

That that in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972 and paragraph 10.4(3) of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public and press be excluded for the consideration of the remaining business.

89 Exempt Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2025, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: