

**Committee and Date**

Council

INSERT NEXT MEETING DATE

COUNCIL**Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024****In the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND****10.00 am - 1.30 pm****Responsible Officer:** Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Councillors Vince Hunt (Chairman), Lezley Picton (Leader), Brian Williams (Vice Chairman), Ian Nellins (Deputy Leader), Roy Aldcroft, Caroline Bagnall, Nicholas Bardsley, Joyce Barrow, Bernie Bentick, Thomas Biggins, Ed Bird, Andy Boddington, Peter Broomhall, Garry Burchett, Gwilym Butler, Dean Carroll, Steve Charmley, Ted Clarke, Rachel Connolly, Gerald Dakin, Rosemary Dartnall, Steve Davenport, Mary Davies, Julian Dean, Geoff Elner, David Evans, Roger Evans, Paul Gill, Rob Gittins, Nat Green, Kate Halliday, Simon Harris, Nigel Hartin, Nick Hignett, Ruth Houghton, Richard Huffer, Tracey Huffer, Kirstie Hurst-Knight, Mark Jones, Simon Jones, Duncan Kerr, Heather Kidd, Nigel Lumby, Christian Lea, Hilary Luff, Robert Macey, David Minnery, Dan Morris, Pamela Moseley, Cecilia Motley, Peggy Mullock, Vivienne Parry, Tony Parsons, John Price, Ed Potter, Chris Schofield, Andrew Sherrington, Colin Taylor, Dan Thomas, Robert Tindall, Edward Towers, Kevin Turley, David Vasmer, Alex Wagner, Claire Wild, Mark Williams, Rob Wilson and Paul Wynn

54 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jeff Anderson, Julia Buckley, Julia Evans, Mike Isherwood, Alan Mosley and Kevin Pardy.

55 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 relation to agenda item 8, Councillor Ruth Houghton declared a personal interest in that she had a family member who had an Education Health and Care Plan

56 Minutes**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

57 **Announcements**

Chairman's Engagements

The Chairman referred Members to the list of official engagements carried out by himself and the Vice Chairman since the last meeting of the Council on 26 September 2024, which had been emailed prior to the meeting.

58 **Public Questions**

The Chairman advised that public questions had been received from Huw Edwards, Julia Jones, Paul Cawthorne, Susan Wedlock, Mike Streetly and Jamie Russell. A copy of the questions and the responses provided are available from the web page for the meeting.

[Public Questions Council 12 December 2024 with Responses.pdf](#)

59 **Questions from Members**

The Speaker advised that 6 questions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15 and that he had agreed that an urgent question could be put.

Question from Councillor Kevin Pardy regarding delays in road resurfacing projects. There was no supplementary question

Question from Councillor Rosemary Dartnall regarding staffing and recruitment. There was no supplementary question.

Question from Councillor Brian Williams regarding the effectiveness of the booking system for Household Waste Recycling Centres. There was no supplementary question

Question from Councillor Rob Wilson regarding the recent closure of footbridges in Shrewsbury. By way of supplementary question Councillor Wilson asked the Portfolio Holder to look into why the Town Council had had to act to ensure that bridges were not closed.

Question from Councillor David Vasmer regarding funding for the North West Relief Road and use of the Local Transport Fund funding. By way of supplementary question Councillor Vasmer asked whether there was a risk that funding such as the LEP funding would be lost. The Portfolio Holder advised that he was not aware of any risk.

Question from Councillor Colin Taylor regarding the use of consultants such as Price Waterhouse Cooper. There was no supplementary question.

Urgent question from Councillor Alex Wagner regarding the Council's response to flooding following Storm Darragh. There was no supplementary question.

60 **Shropshire Corporate Parenting**

It was proposed by Councillor Kirstie Hurst Knight, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education and seconded by Councillor Peggy Mullock that the report of the Executive Director of People and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Councillor Hurst Knight introduced Woody Shemmell, Co-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Steering Board who spoke in support of the proposals.

Members welcomed the report and fully supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED

That

1. All Council members sign up to or re-sign (if previously done) the Care Leavers Covenant.
2. Council endorse the Corporate Parenting Strategy approved by the Corporate Parenting Steering Group, so as to meet the aims, objectives and outcomes of the Council as a good corporate parent.
3. Council approves the Corporate Parenting Steering Board continuing to act as an advisory and consultative body to the Council, its partners and its committees and other strategic groups so as to ensure that the Council's Corporate Parenting duties are carried out effectively and consistently.
4. Council supports the launch of the Care Leavers charity, Above and Beyond (the details of which are set out at Appendix 5)

61 Annual Report of the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education

It was proposed by Councillor Kirstie Hurst Knight, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education that the report and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

Councillor Hurst Knight presented and amplified her report and responded to questions, concerns and comments.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted

62 Setting the Council Tax Taxbase for 2025/26

It was proposed by Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities and seconded by Councillor Simon Harris that the report of the Executive Director, Resources and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

On being put to a recorded vote with 64 Members voting for, 0 against and 0 abstentions as follows:

FOR

Councillors Aldcroft, Bagnall, Bardsley, Barrow, Bentick, Biggins, Bird, Boddington, Broomhall, Burchett, Butler, Carroll, Charmley, Clarke, Connolly, Dakin, Dartnall, Davenport, Davies, Dean, Elner, D Evans, R Evans, Gill, Gittins, Green, Halliday, Harris, Hartin, Hignett, Houghton, R Huffer, T Huffer, Hunt, M Jones, S Jones, Kerr, Kidd, Lea, Luff, Lumby, Macey, Minnery, Morris, Moseley, Motley, Mullock, Nellins, Parry, Parsons, Picton, Potter, Price, Schofield, Sherrington, Taylor, Thomas, Towers, Vasmer, Wagner, B Williams, M Williams, Wilson and Wynn

AGAINST

None

ABSTENTIONS

None

It was **RESOLVED**

That Council

1. approve, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Shropshire Council as it's Council Tax taxbase for the year 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix A, totalling 121,374.04 Band D equivalents.
2. note the changes to the Council's localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2025/26. The scheme is attached at Appendix B
3. note the Council Tax Support Scheme amendments detailed in Appendix B have no impact on the taxbase determination.
4. note the exclusion of 8,146.06 Band D equivalents from the taxbase calculation as a result of localised Council Tax Support.
5. note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to not award a discount in respect of vacant dwellings undergoing major repair, i.e. former Class A exempt properties.
6. note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties, of 100% for one month i.e. effectively reinstating the exemption and the resulting exclusion of 232.45 band D equivalents from the taxbase calculation.
7. note continuation of the "six week rule" in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties.
8. note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 100% in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than one year (but less

- than five years) and the resulting inclusion of an additional 752.78 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
9. note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 200% in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than five years (but less than ten years) and the resulting inclusion of an additional 204.00 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
 10. To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 300% in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than ten years and the resulting inclusion of an additional 196.67 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
 11. note the implementation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 100% in relation to second homes (other than those that retain a 50% discount through regulation as a result of job related protection) and the resulting inclusion of an additional 1,833.88 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
 12. To approve a collection rate for the year 2025/26 of 98.2%

63 Treasury Strategy 24/25 – Mid Year Review

It was proposed by Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities and seconded by Councillor Simon Harris that the report of the Executive Director of Resources and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council

1. Agree the Treasury Strategy activity as set out in the report.
2. Approve the revision to the Prudential Indicators as set out in section 9 of the report.
3. To note that the changes to prudential indicators reflect the reduction of internal cash balances and the need to externalise debt; this is a straightforward liquidity requirement unrelated to other financial matters and would have been required at this time regardless of the wider financial position.
4. Note that provision for additional borrowing costs in revenue budgets was included in the 2024/25 budget

64 Gambling Act 2005 Policy Statement 2025 to 2028

It was proposed by Councillor Chris Schofield, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services and seconded by Councillor Simon Jones that the report of the

Transactional Management and Licensing – Team Manager and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council agrees the proposed Gambling Act 2005 Policy Statement 2025 to 2028 as set out in Appendix 1 will be adopted with effect from 31 January 2025 and delegates authority to the Transactional Management and Licensing Team Manager to publish the policy statement and to advertise it in accordance with the provisions of the Gambling Act 2005

65 Shrewsbury Movement and Public Space Strategy

It was proposed by Councillor Ian Nellins, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Transport and seconded Councillor Dan Morris, Portfolio Holder for Highways that the report of the Executive Director of Place and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

By way of amendment Councillor Julian Dean proposed that a further recommendation be added to establish a cross-party member group of Shrewsbury councillors as Consultees for CIL and highways projects planning in the town to ensure projects are in line with the strategies. This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Kerr. Following a vote with 27 votes for and 39 against the amendment was not supported.

Members welcomed the report and fully supported the proposals.

RESOLVED:

That Council agrees to:

1. Adopt the Shrewsbury Movement and Public Space Strategy (MPSS) as a material consideration in the planning decision-making process.
2. Delegate responsibility to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Transport, to progress implementation of the MPSS, to include, but not limited to, finalising the 10-year delivery plan, subject to securing funding.

66 Interim Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Station Review 2024

It was proposed by Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities and seconded by Councillor Roy Aldcroft that the report of the Returning Officer and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED

1. That Council approve the following arrangements, in order for them to be implemented on or by 1 February 2025.

DIVISION	PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
Polling District Reference: NHB Oswestry South	Following Unitary, Town and Parish elections to be held on 1 May 2025 replace Horeb Welsh Methodist Rooms with Oswestry Cricket Club pavilion as the polling place for NHB Oswestry (Castle Ward) (part of)
Polling District Reference: SBA Bagley	Greenfields & District Bowling Club replace Bagley Sports and Social Club as the polling place for SBA Shrewsbury (Bagley Ward) (part of)
Polling District Reference: SIA Copthorne	Shropshire Education and Conference Centre replace Army Reserve Centre as the polling place for SIA Shrewsbury (Copthorne Ward) (part of)
Polling District Reference: SOA Monkmoor	Abbots Wood Day Centre replace Belvidere Primary School as the polling place for SOA Shrewsbury (Monkmoor Ward) (part of).
Polling District Reference: SPB Porthill	Shrewsbury School Cricket Centre replace Army Reserve Centre as the polling place for SPB Shrewsbury (Porthill Ward) (part of).

2. That delegated authority be given to the Electoral Registration Officer to find a suitable alternative, in conjunction with local members, should any polling place not be available for a particular election.

67 Electoral Services - Scale of Fees 2025/26

It was proposed by Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities and seconded by Councillor Geoff Elner that the report of the Returning Officer and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council agree the Scale of Fees for 2025/26 as set out in Appendices A and B.

2. That Council delegates to the Chief Executive the power to set fees annually in between scheduled local elections.

68 Response to Government Consultation on Remote Attendance/Proxy Voting

It was proposed by Councillor Lezley Picton, Leader and Portfolio Holder Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications and seconded by Councillor Claire Wild that the report of the Assistant Director Legal and Governance and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council approves the response to the consultation attached at Appendix 1

69 Constitution of Committees and Allocation of Seats

It was proposed by Councillor Lezley Picton, Leader and Portfolio Holder Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications and seconded by Councillor Roger Evans that the report of the Assistant Director Legal and Governance and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council confirms the revised allocation of seats to each of the political groups for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year as a consequence of the change in group membership as follows:
 - a) That the composition and revised allocation of seats on its committees and other bodies as detailed in the report be approved.
 - b) That the Leader of the Conservative Group provides notification of which of its members will be removed as a member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Pensions Committee, Audit Committee, Standards Committee, Southern Planning Committee, Northern Planning Committee, Housing Supervisory Board and the Fire Authority
 - c) That the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group provides notification of which of its members will be appointed as a member of the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee and which of its members will be removed as a member of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - d) That the Leader of the Labour Group provides notification of which of its members will be appointed as a member of the Pensions Committee.
 - e) That the Leader of the Independent Group provides notification of which of its members will be appointed as a member of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the Housing Board.

- f) That the Leader of the Green Group provides notification of which of its members will be appointed as a member of the Standards Committee and to the Fire Authority.

2. That the membership of the fire Authority be amended as follows:

Conservative	5	(-1)
Liberal Democrats	2	
Labour	2	
Independent	1	
Green	1	(+1)

70 Motions

Motion received from Councillor Duncan Kerr and supported by the Green Group

It has been widely reported that Oswestry Post Office is one of 115 in the country at risk of closure by the Post Office. This office provides a much needed and valuable service particularly for the elderly and other people with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act.

This Council expresses its absolute opposition to any closure or diminution in services from the Oswestry Post office and calls on the MP for North Shropshire to express in the strongest terms the opposition of residents to this proposal

Following a vote the motion was unanimously supported

Motion received from Councillor Andy Boddington and supported by Councillors Richard Huffer, Tracey Huffer and Rob Wilson

Council will be aware of the concerns of farmers over the imposition of Inheritance Tax (IHT) now that the threshold for Agricultural Property Relief (APR) and Business Property Relief (BPR) has been set at £1 million. This has caused distress among farm owners in Shropshire and beyond, especially those who run smaller and family farms. They fear that payment of IHT by their successors will lead to land being sold to larger farms and investors, ending the centuries old tradition of family farms providing food and protecting the landscape of our county.

Farmers tend to be capital rich and cash poor, especially small farmers. Estimates of the number of small farms with land and business assets valued at £1 million vary from 33% (Treasury) to 66% (Defra). However, the most recent estimate from the NFU suggests that 75% of farms will be affected. It also showed that medium sized farms will not be protected by the ten-year payment window because the IHT payments would be higher than the income on those farms. The average farm sees a 1% return on capital.

The policy IHT will relentlessly erode small family farms. Our future farm landscape will be increasingly large landowners who manage for profit or tax avoidance, not as a livelihood.

The £1 million threshold is unrealistically low and would damage the small family owned farms in Shropshire. In 2021, Shropshire had 3,686 farms. Of these, more than four in five are under 100 hectares. Agriculture is one of the counties largest employers.

Family farms are important to our county. They are the places in which transfer of knowledge and skills needed to manage farms is inherited from generation to generation. The new IHT regime as proposed would cause irrevocable erosion of that knowledge and the irrevocable loss of family farms.

Motion

This Council supports the family and small farmers of Shropshire. It recognises the important contribution they make to providing food and renewable energy, protecting the county's ecology and the beauty of Shropshire's landscape. It recognises that the farming community is a critical part of the social, economic and environmental fabric of rural Shropshire.

Council agrees that:

1. The Leader writes to the minister for farming and secretary of state for Defra urging them to deploy a fairer tax regime for farmers that ensures that small and medium size farms remain viable and that family farms can remain in family ownership.
2. The Leader writes to Shropshire's MPs asking that they use their best endeavours to support family and smaller farms affected by the proposed IHT regime, including lobbying the government to develop alternatives to the 20% at £1 million threshold put forward in the October budget.

On being put to a recorded vote with 58 Members voting for, 0 against and 6 abstentions as follows:

FOR

Councillors Aldcroft, Bardsley, Barrow, Bentick, Biggins, Bird, Boddington, Broomhall, Burchett, Butler, Carroll, Clarke, Dakin, Daies, dean, Elner, D Evans, R Evans, Gill, Gittins, Green, Harris, Hartin, Hignett, Houghton, R Huffer, T Huffer, Hunt, Hurst-Knight, M Jones, S Jones, Kerr, Kidd, Lea, Luff, Lumby, Macey, Minnery, Morris, Motley, Mullock, Nellins, Parry, Picton, Potter, Schofield, Sherrington, Taylor, Thomas, Tindall, Towers, Vasmer, Wagner, Wild, B Williams, M Williams, Wilson and Wynn

AGAINST

None

ABSTAIN

Councillors Bagnall, Connolly, Dartnall, Halliday, Moseley and Parsons

The motion was supported.

71 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

72 Exempt Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

73 Chief Executive and Chief Officer Pay Award 2024/25

It was proposed by Councillor Lezley Picton, Leader and Portfolio Holder Policy and Strategy, Improvement and Communications and seconded by Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities that the exempt report of the Executive Director of Resources, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations contained in the report be agreed

Signed (Chairman)

Date: