

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2025

In the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ

2.00 p.m. - 2.32 p.m.

Responsible Officer: Sarah Townsend Committee Officer

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Present:

Councillors Ed Potter (Chairman), Sam Walmsley (Vice-Chair), Donna Edmunds, Craig Emery, Gary Groves, Alan Holford, Chris Naylor, Sharon Ritchie-Simmons, Rhys Gratton (Substitute) (substitute for Wendy Owen) and Dawn Husemann (Substitute) (substitute for Brendan Mallon)

Others present at the meeting:

Councillor Roger Evans – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor James Owen – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure
Councillor Rob Wilson – Portfolio Holder for Transport and Economic Growth
James Walton, Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)
Steve Law, Head of Property and Development
Tom Dodds, Scrutiny Manager
Claire Braddock, Overview and Scrutiny Officer

5 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brendan Mallon and Wendy Owen.

Councillor Dawn Husemann was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Brendan Mallon and Councillor Rhys Gratton was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Wendy Owen.

6 Disclosable Interests

There were no interests declared.

7 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

1. That the minutes of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23rd January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

2. That the minutes of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22nd May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

8 Public Question Time

Public Question

A public question had been received from Mr John Palmer regarding whether the new Chairman of the committee would be recommending that the committee freshly scrutinise the subscription timescales concerning garden waste collection annual charges for 2025/26. Mr Palmer was in attendance to ask his question and the response to the question was provided by the Chairman. A full copy of the question and response provided is available from the web page for the meeting.

Petition for Skateboard Facility and Pump Track in Oswestry

A petition bearing 423 signatures had been received from Ms Olly Rose and Mr Theo Merchant and asked Shropshire Council to pass the unused land to the north of Oswestry Leisure Centre to Oswestry Town Council on condition that it is used for a skateboard facility and pump track.

Ms Olly Rose and Ms Daisy Kirtley (local resident) were present at the meeting and presented the petition to the committee. They explained that Oswestry Town Council had received requests and a petition from local young people requesting a skatepark and pump track, Oswestry Town Council had both the money and the will to complete it, such a facility would help to encourage exercise and promote a healthy lifestyle, ancient woodlands and protected bluebells were currently being damaged in the absence of proper provision and planning permission for this type of use was given in 2008 and amended in 2012 but had not materialised.

In debating the petition, committee discussion and comments covered:

- The importance of young people, the facilities that were in place for them and the importance of the council in listening and working with them to help meet their needs was emphasised.
- A skateboard facility and pump track would promote exercise, provide increased mental and physical health benefits, help towards achieving overweight and obesity targets and reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Having listened to the petitioners, there was clearly both a need and a demand for these facilities in Oswestry.
- Frustration was expressed regarding the delay to date, given that planning permission had been granted back in 2008 and it was questioned why nothing had happened. The committee were keen to see progress now being made.
- Whether the committee could scrutinise the length of time that it takes for decisions to be made as due to the delay, whole generations of children had missed out in Oswestry.

- If the skateboard facility and pump track were to go ahead, Oswestry Town Council should be encouraged to have a proper consultation process with the local young people who would use it regarding the design of the track. This would ensure that it meets both their wants and needs and is not underutilised.
- The Portfolio Holder for Finance clarified that Oswestry Town Council have the Capital Receipt for this and would be fully funding it themselves, at no cost to Shropshire Council, other than the loss of the land.
- The damage that had been done to nearby ancient woodland and protected bluebells was of particular concern and needed to be addressed to make sure that it does not continue to be mistreated.
- Whether the council could review outside spaces facilities for youths across the county and in particular, address obesity with apparatus equipment. The Chairman explained that this could be considered as part of the committee's work programme should the rest of the committee be in agreement and would be discussed within their informal work programming session.
- With Oswestry growing, there may be a future need for expansion of the leisure facilities or car parking for the leisure centre, so the design and location of the skateboard facility and pump track would need to take this into consideration.
- Should the proposed skateboard facility and pump track not be well used or falls out of favour, the option to revert this facility back to Shropshire Council or for it to be used for other similar youth / leisure activities would be beneficial.
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure disclosed that whilst he was an Oswestry Town Council Member he was in attendance at the meeting as Portfolio Holder for Shropshire Council and was speaking as such. He explained that both the administration and himself, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, were willing to consider the transfer through a lease of part of the land, rather than through the whole parcel of the land.

Prior to the committee's consideration of a recommendation, the Head of Property and Development explained that planning permission had been granted but that the land, approximately two hectares adjacent to the leisure centre, was not currently being used and therefore remains as was. It could be considered as part of the wider work around transfers of spaces to local town and parish councils.

RESOLVED:

Recommendation to Cabinet – Recognising the general support for the petition that has been put forward, it was agreed that it be passed to the relevant Portfolio Holder to explore the most appropriate route for transferring the land to Oswestry Town Council.

9 Member Question Time

None had been received.

10 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 (7) of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items.

11 Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23rd January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

12 Date/Time of Next Meeting of the Committee

It was noted that the next meeting of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to be held on Thursday, 13th November 2025 commencing at 2.00 p.m. However, at the committee's informal work programming session, consideration would be given to potentially holding a meeting in September (date and time to be confirmed).

Signed (Chairman)

Date: