



Committee and Date

Council

26 February 2026

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2025

**In the The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.00 am - 2.30 pm**

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

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

Present

Councillors Duncan Borrowman (Chairman), Heather Kidd (Leader), Gary Groves (Vice-Chair), Alex Wagner (Deputy Leader), Sho Abdul, Caroline Bagnall, Elizabeth Barker, Neil Bentley, Jeremy Blandford, Thomas Clayton, Susan Coleman, Rachel Connolly, Tom Dainty, Rosemary Dartnall, David Davies, Pamela Davies, Andy Davis, Julian Dean, Mandy Duncan, Greg Ebbs, Susan Eden, Donna Edmunds, Brian Evans, Roger Evans, Adam Fejfer, Rhys Gratton, Andy Hall, Kate Halliday, 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, Vicky Moore, Mark Morris, Alan Mosley, Malcolm Myles-Hook, Chris Naylor, James Owen, Mark Owen, Wendy Owen, Vivienne Parry, Rosie Radford, Sharon Ritchie-Simmons, Colin Stanford, Jon Tandy, Colin Taylor, Dan Thomas, Teri Trickett, David Vasmer, Beverley Waite, David Walker, Sam Walmsley, Alison Williams and Rob Wilson

48 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bernie Bentick, Ed Bird, Andy Boddington, Jamie Daniel, Josh Dicken, Craig Emery, David Minnery, Ed Potter and Carl Rowley

49 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.

50 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2025, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

51 Announcements

Death of Ex Councillor Brian Williams

The Chair reported the death of Ex-Councillor Brian Williams. Brian was a longstanding Councillor having served on North Shropshire District Council, Shropshire County Council and Shropshire Council. He served as Shropshire County Council Speaker from 2008 to 2009, and held the same role on Shropshire Council until 2017. He then served as Vice-Chairman of the Council from 2021 until stepping down at the elections in May 2025. He was also Chairman of the audit committee on both councils from 2006 to 2025.

Members stood for a period of silence in his memory

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 25 September 2025, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

52 Public Questions at Council, Cabinet and Committee Meetings

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

A Member requested that responses to questions be circulated prior to the meeting as had previously been done as it was difficult to fully digest the response in the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That an additional paragraph be added to section 14.1 of the Council Procedure Rules stating:

“That a member of the public asking a question under Rule 14.1 may ask one supplementary question without notice of the Member to whom the first question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. Any supplementary question which cannot be dealt with during the time allotted for Public Questions will be dealt with by a written answer”

53 Public Questions

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

Question from Susan Wedlock regarding the Boxing Day Hunt Meet in Ludlow
(Question read by the Interim Democratic Services Manager)

Question from Marcus Watkin regarding the Shrewsbury Station gyratory bus-stop scheme
(Question read by the Interim Democratic Services Manager)

Question from Joanna Blackman regarding the National Emergency Briefing on the Climate and Nature Crisis. In response to a supplementary question the Leader stated that it would be difficult to get all the Councillors together to watch the film and that there were a lot of ways people could feed into the process, and there was a lot of collaborative work going on with other groups.

Question from John Palmer regarding the Council's application for "Exceptional Financial Support". There was no supplementary question

Question from Andrew Sceats regarding Cornovii Developments. In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Council did not pay the full salary of the director in question as that's now paid via the company as it was a separate legal entity.

Question from John Crowe regarding the future of the Shirehall. In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder confirmed that there would be discussion with all interested parties during the planning process

54 **Questions from Members**

The Chair advised that 5 questions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15

Question from Councillor Sarah Marston regarding a reduction of the speed limit on the B5476 at Harmer Hill. In response to a supplementary question the Deputy Portfolio Holder advised that he would need to liaise with Officers regarding timescales for the works.

Question from Councillor Robert Jones regarding the impact of residential development on the River Perry. There was no supplementary question

Question from Councillor Chris Naylor regarding the Shirehall. In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder stated that he was happy to accommodate any party that would like to access the Shirehall and would be interested in accompanying anybody that did want to visit.

Question from Councillor Brendan Mallon regarding the Station Gyrotory System. In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder stated that it was important that our young people have the opportunity to stay here but that we must also welcome young people from elsewhere.

Question from Councillor Carl Rowley regarding an audit to identify non-essential spending. There was no supplementary question

55 **Auditors Annual Report**

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.

Members welcomed the action that had already been taken to address the concerns raised in the Auditors report but stressed the need for continued improvement especially in corporate governance. They stated that there was a need for transparency and clear communication with residents

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- a. Acknowledge and accept the statutory recommendation made by the External Auditors
- b. Address the statutory recommendation through the immediate management response and actions set out in paragraphs 2.3 and 7.9 of this report together with the adoption and implementation of the Council's Improvement Plan and its programmes of action focussed on financial stability, strengthening financial management policy and practice and "Getting the Basics Right" (strengthening corporate governance)
- c. Agree that the Audit and Governance Committee receives updates on the progress of the Council in addressing the various elements of the Statutory Recommendation.
- d. Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the External Auditor with the outcome of the Council's consideration of this report.

56 **Improvement Plan**

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council

- a. Agree the draft Improvement Plan (Appendix 1).
- b. Agree the governance arrangements set out in the Plan.
- c. Agree that the capacity and resources to support the delivery of transformation required through this plan will be aligned to the MTFS.

57 People Plan

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council

- a. Agree the draft People Plan (Appendix 1).
- b. Agree the governance arrangements and key actions set out in the Plan.
- c. Agree the capacity and resources necessary to support the delivery of organisational change and development, are aligned with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to ensure effective and sustainable implementation

58 Setting the Council Tax Taxbase for 2026/27

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

On being put to a recorded vote with 62 Members voting for, 0 against and 1 abstention as follows:

FOR

Councillors Abdul, Bagnall, Barker, Bentley, Blandford, Borrowman, Clayton, Coleman, Connolly, Dainty, Dartnall, D Davies, P Davies, Davis, Dean, Duncan, Ebbs, Eden, B Evans, R Evans, Fejfer, Gratton, Groves, Hall, Halliday, Hancock-Davies, Holford, Hollyhead, Houghton, D Husemann, P Husemann, Jephcott, Jones, Kerr, Kidd, Lemon, Lumby, Mallon, Marston, Moore, Morris, Mosley, Myles-Hook, Naylor, J Owen, M Owen, W Owen, Parry, Radford, Ritchie-Simmons, Stanford, Tandy, Taylor, Thomas, Trickett, Vasmer, Wagner, Waite, Walker, Walmsley, Williams and Wilson

ABSTENTION

Councillor Edmunds

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 2026/27, as detailed in Appendix A, totalling 121,852.37 Band D equivalents.

2. Approve the changes to the Council's localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2026/27. 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 7,950.74 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 243.34 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 859.89 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 194.22 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
10. 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 202.66 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
11. Note the continuation 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 1,390.00 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation
12. Approve a collection rate for the year 2026/27 of 98.0%.

13. Note that the Council Tax Support policy and other similar Council Tax and Business Rate policies are reviewed and consulted upon, where necessary, over 2026 with a view to implementing any revisions by Financial Year 2027/28 at the latest

59 Treasury Strategy 2025/26 Mid-Year Review

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

RESOLVED:

That Council agree the Treasury Strategy activity as set out in the report

60 Children's Services Annual Report

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:

1. That Council acknowledge the content of the reports attached and the positive impact and outcomes that services are achieving for children and young people.
2. That Council acknowledge the breadth of statutory requirements being successfully delivered and achieving good outcomes for the children and young people in Shropshire.
3. That where Council wish to influence progress and development opportunities this can be incorporated into the plans of the Ambitions Board which will be driving forward the services continuous improvement plan.
4. That Council recommend that it receive the Annual Report and resolve that Childrens Safeguarding training becomes a mandatory requirement for all elected Members in order that they are well equipped to fulfil their role as corporate parents.

61 Appointment of Interim Chief Executive, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

1. That Tanya Miles be appointed as Interim Chief Executive in accordance with section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989
2. That Tanya Miles (Interim Chief Executive) be appointed as Returning Officer in accordance with section 35(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with immediate effect.
3. That Tanya Miles (Interim Chief Executive) be appointed as the Electoral Registration Officer in accordance with section 8(2)(a) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with immediate effect
4. That Tim Collard (Service Director – Legal, Governance and Planning (Monitoring Officer)) be appointed as the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer in accordance with section 52(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with immediate effect

62 Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel members

It was proposed by Councillor Roger Evans, Portfolio Holder for Finance and seconded by Councillor Andy Hall, portfolio Holder for Children and Education that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the following be appointed to the Independent Remuneration Panel of Shropshire Council:

- Tim Griffiths
- Vince Hunt
- Tony Parsons
- Richard Garnett

63 Changes to Committee Membership

It was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Duncan Borrowman, and seconded by the Vice Chairman, Councillor Gary Groves, that the amendments to committee membership as set out in the agenda papers be agreed. In addition, members were notified of an additional amendment to the Southern Planning Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the amendments to committee membership as set out in the agenda papers be agreed, together with the addition of Councillor Colin Stanford replacing Councillor Dan Thomas as a substitute member of the Southern Planning Committee.

64 Motions

The following motions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 16:

a Motion received from Councillors Alex Wagner and Dan Thomas and supported by Councillors Duncan Kerr and Dawn Husemann

Enhancing Accessibility of Council Meetings

This Council recognises the importance of ensuring that all elected members, regardless of employment status, are able to fully participate in the democratic process and contribute to the work of Shropshire Council. All Scrutiny and Committee meetings are currently scheduled during standard working hours. This timing can present barriers to engagement for members who work full-time or have other daytime commitments. To improve accessibility and inclusivity for all Members and the Public, this Council resolves to:

1. Move a selection of Scrutiny and other Committee meetings to a 6pm start time, with the aim of enabling greater participation from working-age members.
2. Request that Democratic Services continue to consult with Group Leaders and Committee Chairs to identify suitable meetings for evening scheduling.
3. Review the impact of this change after a twelve-month period from implementation, including feedback from members and officers, to assess its effectiveness and sustainability.

This Motion seeks to modernise our approach to member engagement and ensure that Shropshire Council remains representative and responsive to the needs of all its elected members.

On taking a vote the motion was supported and it was **RESOLVED:**

That Council

1. Move a selection of Scrutiny and other Committee meetings to a 6pm start time, with the aim of enabling greater participation from working-age members.
2. Request that Democratic Services continue to consult with Group Leaders and Committee Chairs to identify suitable meetings for evening scheduling.
3. Review the impact of this change after a twelve-month period from implementation, including feedback from members and officers, to assess its effectiveness and sustainability.

b Motion received from Councillor Brendan Mallon and supported by Councillors Dawn Husemann, Carl Rowley, Harry Hancock Davies and George Hollyhead

Members of the Economy and Environment Committee were recently briefed on the proposed Sundorne Sports Village redevelopment. Some of us were disappointed to see that Pyrolysis technology has not been considered for the requirement to supply both bulk heating and electrical energy for the facility, seemingly an ideal solution for such an application.

Instead, a multi-million pound system of air source heat pumps and solar panels has been selected. This technology will somewhat mitigate reliance on the world's most expensive electricity grid but will still be highly dependent on that grid in low light and/or low temperature conditions. The production and supply chain for the solar panels in particular involves highly carbon-intensive production and transport from China, with a high risk of slave labour being involved. These panels are also uneconomical to recycle, with the attendant risk to the environment from end-of-life disposal.

By contrast, the Pyrolysis technology provides abundant heat and electricity on demand, is completely 'off-grid', is carbon negative and should repay its capital costs over time through the sales of biochar product and carbon credits, unlike the heat pumps and panels which are merely lower carbon and is still heavily grid-dependent. The equipment is easily recyclable at its end-of-life. The plants and their feedstock are both locally produced, supporting local employment and commerce. The Council is already heavily invested in this technology at the Ludlow site, as well as having made a substantial £500000 direct investment in manufacturer Biodynamic Carbon Ltd.

This Council has already expressed robust support for this technology at a Full Council meeting, voting in additional funding to bring our total investment up to a considerable £3.3 million. If we are spending over £3 million of council taxpayers' money on this technology in Ludlow and have substantially bought into the manufacturer, then it should be a serious contender for the Sundorne application.

In order to support what would appear to be an economically and environmentally superior technology, as well as supporting local industry and demonstrating confidence in Shropshire Council's own existing direct investment in its use and production, we move that a full side-by-side comparison of the two systems be made, with the superior technology being selected for deployment on the Sundorne project. The comparison should consider the full life-cycle costs (including offset through biochar and carbon credit sales) and environmental impact of equipment procurement, replacement and disposal across the expected lifetime of the Sports Village, as well as comparing overall energy and CO2 budgets across that life-cycle.

Let's keep the Shropshire Pound in Shropshire.

By way of amendment Councillor Julian Dean proposed

Delete all and replace with:

Council notes the intention for energy efficiency measures in the new development proposals for the Sports Village, which will make use of proven technologies including solar PV and heat pumps. We further note that heat pump technology is a highly efficient use of electricity to provide heating and is suitable for the vast majority of houses in the UK. However, as long as electricity prices remain tied to those of gas, electricity consumers are penalised due to the high and volatile prices of fossil fuels, undermining the incentive to convert away from fossil fuel-based heating.

Despite the clear benefits in terms of reduced greenhouse gas emissions of using PV and heat pumps, we recognise that the supply chain for these technologies is often reliant on imports, and that there are risks associated with highly carbon-intensive production and transport from China, with a high risk of slave labour being involved. We ask the portfolio holder for economic growth, and officers responsible for this and any other development, to look to use and/or develop supply chains close to home.

Council is disappointed to note that initial plans do not include introducing sustainable technologies for heating and energy across the rest of the facility as recommended by this council. We welcome the inclusion of such an option for consideration in early 2026.

We note that Pyrolysis technology provides abundant heat and electricity on demand, is completely 'off-grid', is carbon negative and could well repay its capital costs over time through the sales of biochar product and carbon credits. The equipment is easily recyclable at its end-of-life. The plants and their feedstock are both locally produced, supporting local employment and commerce. The Council is already heavily invested in this technology at the Ludlow site, as well as having made a substantial £500000 direct investment in manufacturer Biodynamic Carbon Ltd. We note that making use of locally sourced renewable energy, whether wind, solar or through pyrolysis, will help to 'keep the Shropshire pound in Shropshire'.

We further note that the opportunity for a district heat network based around a C1000 Pyrolysis plant identified by officers, which could produce far more heat than the swimming pool and leisure centre combined would need.

We continue to express our support for an economically and environmentally excellent technology, that supports local industry and demonstrates confidence in Shropshire Council's own existing direct investment in its use and production. We welcome the fact that the portfolio holder is bringing a proposal to cabinet for officers to examine the feasibility of developing a local heat network. This would be based on Pyrolysis deployment on the sports village site with the aim of decarbonising the existing sports village buildings and providing lower cost heat and power to the new facilities. We expect that such a feasibility study would include a comparison with the proposed heating system for the new development at the Sports Village.

We ask that there is rapid consideration of whether this feasibility study would justify reconsideration of the currently agreed plans for the new development, which is already designed to very high energy efficiency standards (realising BREEAM excellent standards).

On taking a vote the amendment was approved and on taking a further vote the amended resolution was supported

65 Report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

The Chair advised that this report had been withdrawn

The Chairman advised Members that an additional public report had been published on the Shirehall Strategic Review and therefore proposed to bring the item forward into the public session to allow appropriate public discussion prior to moving into the exempt section. He reminded Members to avoid discussing any of the exempt information in the public part of the meeting

66 Shirehall Strategic Review

It was proposed by the Councillor Rob Wilson, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Economic Growth and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Several Members expressed concern at the late publication of the reports and felt that consideration of the item should be deferred to enable Members to fully consider the contents of the reports.

Councillor Dawn Husemann suggested that a Task and Finish Group be set up to fully consider all the options prior to a decision being made.

67 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

68 Shirehall Strategic Review

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

By way of amendment Councillor Dawn Husemann proposed that an additional recommendation be added that a Task and Finish Group be set up to fully consider all the options prior to a decision being made. Councillor Evans indicated that he would accept the amendment.

RESOLVED

That Council

1. Amend their previous decision (December 2023) to seek full residential planning permission. Instead, pursue Option 11, progress a mixed-use outline planning permission, initiate public engagement, and submit the application in early 2026.
2. Completes additional masterplan options for a mixed-use development incorporating healthcare, affordable supported living, commercial, and residential elements. Prepare and finalise a business case for consideration by Council at a future meeting.
3. Approves the submission of a request to extend the Certificate of Immunity from Listing for the Shirehall site.
4. Delegates authority to the Head of Property and Development to progress items 1 to 3 in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Transport & Economic Growth
5. Sets up a Task and Finish Group to consider all options for the site

69 Chief Executive and Chief Officer 2025/26 Pay Award Options

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities that the exempt report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendation contained in the report be approved

Signed (Chairman)

Date: