



**Committee and Date**

**Council**

**26 February 2026**

Item

Public



# Report of the Shirehall Strategic Review Rapid Task and Finish Group

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Tom Dodds		
email:	tom.dodds@shopshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 252818
<b>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):</b>	Cllr Roger Evans		
<b>Council Task and Finish Group Chair:</b>	Cllr Dawn Huseman		

## 1. Synopsis

*The findings and recommendations of the Council-appointed rapid task and finish group of Members to consider the options presented for the Shirehall building and site at the Council on the 11 December 2025.*

## 2. Executive Summary

This report presents the report, findings and recommendations of the Shirehall Strategic Review rapid task and finish group that was established following 11 December 2025 Council.

The Task and Finish Group Members were Councillor Dawn Husemann, Councillor Chris Naylor, Councillor Rosemary Dartnell, Councillor Julian Dean and Councillor Susan Coleman, these were drawn from each of the five political groups of the Council - Reform UK, the Liberal Democrats, Labour, the Greens and the Conservatives.

The task and finish group carried out their work rapidly in order to report to the next meeting of Council on the 26 February 2026. They have considered the options presented to Council in December 2025 in the Shirehall Strategic Review report, reviewed a range of relevant reports and information on the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Shirehall building, and sought evidence from national and local groups and individuals, as well as those with knowledge on different options to bring the building and site into use, such as Joint Ventures (JV).

They have made 10 recommendations which are summarised in paragraph 7.2 of this covering report, and in full in section 5 of the Task and Finish group report attached at appendix 1, and they have also proposed next steps.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. Council are asked to consider the task and finish group report and recommendations.

## **Report**

### **4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

- 4.1. The task and finish group have concluded that the council risks both financial and reputational harm if it goes ahead with demolition before it has a full understanding of different ways that the value of the building and site can be maximised.
- 4.2. By way of mitigation for this risk, they believe that the value of the Shirehall building as an asset has not been fully explored with the community or with the market, and neither has its potential to strategically contribute to meeting social and economic needs e.g. by using the building for housing, as a base for service provision, a hotel, or a mixed-use across the different floors, combined with new development on the wider site. Engagement with the community and with the market will help to fully test the value and inform the best option and opportunity.

### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1. Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands and a financial emergency was declared by Cabinet on 10 September 2025. The overall financial position of the Council is set out in the monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. Significant management action has been instigated at all levels of the Council reducing spend to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all reports to Members provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers and/or Portfolio Holders review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. All non-essential spend will be stopped and all essential spend challenged. These actions may involve (this is not exhaustive):
  - scaling down initiatives,
  - changing the scope of activities,

- delaying implementation of agreed plans, or
- extending delivery timescales.

- 5.2. The task and finish group has recommended that the Council pauses its decision to demolish the Shirehall building to carry out further work to evaluate the full range of options for the site. The report to Council identified that there are ongoing holding costs of £374,600 per year (£31,220.83 a month). The group understand that it will likely take more time than previously understood before any demolition could take place, including for planning permission and any building regulation requirements to be completed, therefore the costs would need to be covered, in addition to any demolition and site clearance costs.
- 5.3. Aligned with the longer timescales to develop the site, the group believe that the potential value of the Shirehall building and site set out in the preferred option reported to 11 December 2025 Council may not realise the forecast level.

## 6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The Shirehall has an estimated £2.5 million of embedded carbon value captured within its structure. Demolition would result in this being lost. There would also be the environmental impact
- 6.2. The group believe that the building could be made more efficient for example by fitting secondary glazing to the original windows. Whilst this may not be as good as replacing all of the windows with double or triple glazed units, it would cost a fraction of the price. They also understand that the solar panels on the building should achieve good levels of efficiency for a further 15 years, based on their expected life time.

## 7. Background

- 7.1. The task and finish group of members from each of the five political groups at the council have considered a wide range of relevant evidence to inform their work and help them reach their findings and recommendations. They arranged visits to the Shirehall site for interested groups and Members, held an evidence gathering session on the afternoon of the 9 February hearing from a range of witnesses, and heard from further witnesses to close gaps in their understanding and help inform their conclusions and recommendations. This information is referenced in section 2 of their report in appendix 1.
- 7.2. The task and finish group made 10 recommendations as a result of their work. These are listed below and are set out in full in section 5 of the task and finish group report attached at appendix 1.
1. Immediate pause on demolition
  2. Start work on a twin track approach
  3. Undertake comprehensive engagement
  4. Define red lines [for the Shirehall building and site]
  5. Define a co-ordinated Shropshire Council workplace and staffing strategy
  6. Issues two market prospectuses
  7. Commission full economic and environmental assessments

8. Set a realistic development timeline
9. Fully evaluate Joint Venture and private sale approaches
10. Maintain momentum

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

Shirehall Strategic Review – Council, 11 December 2025

**Local Member:** Jamie Daniels

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Report of the Shirehall Strategic Review Rapid Task and Finish Group**