



Committee and Date

Cabinet

11 March 2026

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2026

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

Responsible Officer: Ashley Kendrick

Email: ashley.kendrick@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 250893

Present

Councillors Heather Kidd (Chair), Alex Wagner, Bernie Bentick, Roger Evans, Andy Hall, James Owen, Rob Wilson, David Vasmer, David Walker and Sarah Marston (substitute for Ruth Houghton)

In attendance

Councillors Brendan Mallon (Deputy Leader of Reform UK), Rosemary Dartnall (Group Leader – Labour), Duncan Kerr (Group Leader – Green & Progressive Independents – via Teams), Ed Potter.

Tanya Miles – Interim Chief Executive, Rachel Robinson - Executive Director for Public Health, Tim Collard – Service Director for Legal, Governance & Planning, Mannie Ketley – Finance Director (via Teams), Clare Williams – Deputy S151 Officer (via Teams), Paul Clarke – Service Director for Strategy & Change (via Teams), Duncan Whitfield – Interim Director for Financial Improvement, Ashley Kendrick – Democratic Services Officer

117 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Councillors Ruth Houghton (substituted by Councillor Sarah Marston, Deputy Portfolio Holder for Social Care), Dawn Husemann (Group Leader – Reform UK) and Dan Thomas (Group Leader – Conservatives).

118 Disclosable Interests

With regard to Agenda Item 17 Councillor Rob Wilson declared an interest as he was the Leader of Shrewsbury Town Council and stated that although he had a dispensation he would leave the room and take no part in the debate or vote.

With regard to Agenda item 17 Councillors David Vasmer and Bernie Bentick declared an interest as they were members of Shrewsbury Town council but stated that they had a dispensation which allowed them to participate in the discussion and vote

With regard to Agenda item 17 Councillors James Owen and David Walker declared an interest as they were members of Oswestry Town council but stated that they had a dispensation which allowed them to participate in the discussion and vote

With regard to Agenda Item 17 Councillor Alex Wagner declared an interest as he was a member of Shrewsbury town Council but stated that as he took no part in the decision making at the Town Council level he was able to vote.

Councillor Rosemary Dartnall also advised that she was a member of Shrewsbury Town Council

With regard to Agenda item 19 Councillors James Owen and David Walker declared an interest as they were members of Oswestry Town Council and stated that would leave the room and take no part in the debate or vote.

119 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2026 be confirmed as an accurate record.

120 Public Question Time

One public question had been received:

John Palmer, in relation to domestic abuse support. In response to a supplementary question, members confirmed their agreement that domestic abuse was a national emergency.

The full question and response can be found here - [Response to Public Questions - Cabinet 11.2.26.pdf](#)

121 Member Question Time

One members' question had been received:

Councillor Rosemary Dartnall, in relation to the North West Relief Road. In response to concerns raised, the Portfolio Holder acknowledged that there had been insufficient historic oversight of the project and that there was a need for a full review of spending and improved contract management. A lessons learnt activity would be carried out through future scrutiny activity.

The full question and response can be found here - [Response to Members Questions - Cabinet 11.2.26.pdf](#)

122 Scrutiny Items

a Scrutiny Item - Partnership Working Task and Finish Group Update

In the absence of the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor Ed Potter presented the second report of the Partnership Working Task and Finish Group. Members were advised that Phase Two of the group's work had focused on engagement with town and parish councils, particularly in relation to partnership working and the proposed devolution of certain services. Due to the distinct nature of this work, the devolution agenda would be progressed separately from the wider partnership review.

Feedback highlighted differing needs between rural and urban areas, concerns about capacity and resources within town and parish councils, and the importance of clear communication, trust and tangible benefits in any future partnership arrangements. It was emphasised that partnership models should avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and build on existing good practice.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet endorse the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group set out below:

Recommendation 1 – A collaborative approach to a data audit between town and parish councils and Shropshire Council is essential to understanding expectations of one another. This needs to include clarity over what the statutory minimum is, a joint mapping of services and a clear understanding of service provision.

Recommendation 2 - Ensure that work undertaken with town and parish councils is transparent and honest, with the aim of reaching a mutually beneficial arrangement that doesn't risk erosion of any previous good will arrangements by imposing too much bureaucracy and oversight.

Recommendation 3 – Allow Town and Parish Councils to be involved in the joint development of any proposed Partnership arrangements, working together to provide clear benefits for local communities, alleviating some of the town and parish concerns highlighted in this report.

Recommendation 4 – Provide regular communication with town and parish councils and look to improve ways in which they can communicate more easily with Shropshire Council officers and service areas.

123 Estimated Collection Fund Outturn For 2025/2026

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the estimated collection fund outturn, highlighting a projected shortfall in council tax income due to increased bad debt provision.

Members were advised that the council was adding capacity to the Revenues and Benefits team to clear old debts and improve collection rates, with plans to review and potentially write off unrecoverable debts by the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Noted the overall Collection Fund estimated deficit of £4.022m for the year ending 31st March 2026, comprised of an estimated deficit of £1.465m for Council Tax and an estimated deficit of £2.557m for Non-Domestic Rates (NDR).
2. Noted the distribution of the Collection Fund estimated deficit for Council Tax and NDR to the major/relevant precepting authorities and the Secretary of State.

3. Noted Shropshire Council's share of the overall estimated deficit of £2.446m, comprised of an estimated deficit of £1.206m for Council Tax and an estimated deficit of £1.240m for NDR.
4. Noted the inclusion of Shropshire Council's share of the overall estimated deficit for Council Tax and NDR in the 2026/27 budget.

124 Fees and Charges 2026/27

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report which presented the budgeted income to be received and proposed the level of fees and charges to be applied by Shropshire Council in 2026/27.

Concerns were raised about the competitiveness of planning pre-application fees compared to neighbouring authorities, with a commitment to review specific cases and consider the impact on economic growth and inward investment.

Members noted that no increases to parking charges or home-to-school transport fees were included, with ongoing reviews to ensure fairness and cost-effectiveness, particularly for rural residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure highlighted the freezing of wedding venue fees at council-owned cultural sites, encouraging their use to generate income and support local heritage.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet members agreed and recommended to full Council the recommendations below.

1. To 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.
2. To approve the charges for 2026/27 as detailed in Appendix 3 to be implemented from 1 April 2026.
3. 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.
4. To 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.
5. To note that the proposed new charges for Adult Social Care Deferred Payment Policy, are detailed in a separate report which is also being considered in this meeting.

6. To revise housing rents as follows (subject to restrictions or exemptions identified in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill):

6.1 Social Housing and Affordable rents for 2026/27 are increased by 4.8% from 6 th April 2026.

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

125 Treasury Strategy 2026/27

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the Treasury Strategy for 2026/27, which sets out the arrangements for how the council will appropriately manage its arrangements for banking, cash flow management, investments, and borrowing, supporting the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Members noted the current position on investments and borrowing, including that cash balances were lower than in previous years and that maintaining liquidity remained a priority. The role of the Treasury team in managing borrowing and investments in line with the approved Strategy was acknowledged.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet recommends that 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 Prudential Indicators, set out in Appendix 1 (parts 4), in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003.
- c) Approve, with any comments, the Investment Strategy, set out in Appendix 1 (part 5) in accordance with the DLUHC Guidance on Local Government Investments.
- 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.

126 Financial Strategy 2026/27 - 2030/31

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the Financial Strategy, including updates following the final Local Government Finance Settlement.

It was noted that the settlement confirmed a reduction in government funding compared to the current year, alongside the Government's agreement to allow Shropshire Council to apply an additional council tax increase above the standard referendum limit. Members acknowledged the significant financial pressures facing the Council, particularly in relation to adult social care, SEND, and overall service sustainability.

Cabinet noted that applying the additional council tax flexibility would reduce the level of borrowing required to set a balanced budget and help mitigate future interest costs. The importance of providing support and advice to residents most affected by the increase was emphasised.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet note that the final settlement has been received in line with the provisional statement and in particular the special permission for Shropshire to raise an additional 4% supplement above the Council Tax limit of 4.99%.
2. That the S151 Officer be requested to make amendments to the budget report to be presented at Council on the 26th February to include a recommended supplement of 4% on Council Tax with a compensating reduction in the Exceptional Financial Support.
3. That the S151 Officer be requested to ensure that appropriate officer support is available within the Council Tax team to provide advice and guidance to those who may be most impacted by this increase. This is to ensure they are receiving all financial support available to them through benefits and the Government Crisis Resilience scheme.

127 Treasury Management Update Quarter 3 2025/26

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which showed the return on investments over quarter 3, the economic outlook for the next 3 years and confirmed activities align with the Council approved Treasury Management Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet reviewed the position as set out in the report –

- a) Noting the summary of the wider economic environment and the Council's borrowings and investments set out in Appendix A
- b) Noting the performance within prudential indicators for quarter 3, 2025/26 (Appendix B)

128 Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2025/26

The Leader presented the performance monitoring report for quarter 3.

Members noted that the majority of key performance indicators were performing at or above target, while a number of indicators remained below target and were being actively managed.

The Cabinet welcomed improvements in several areas, including homelessness prevention and the reduction in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, and acknowledged progress in social work assessment timeliness. Members also noted ongoing challenges, particularly in relation to Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) timescales, food safety inspections, recycling performance, and sickness absence.

It was noted that improvement plans were in place for underperforming areas and that further work was underway to address capacity and demand pressures.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Noted progress to date in achieving the outcomes of The Shropshire Plan, utilising the interactive Shropshire Plan Performance Dashboard
- 2) Collectively review and align Shropshire's Performance Management Framework and the associated suite of KPIs with the new administration's priorities, Corporate Plan and the Local Government Outcomes Framework metrics.

129 Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2025/26

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which highlighted a marginal deterioration in the forecast outturn position to £53.261m, which can be managed within existing earmarked reserves.

Members noted the current financial position, including significant pressures arising from demand-led services, particularly adult social care and SEND, and the impact of inflation and reduced government funding. It was noted that the Council continued to take action to manage expenditure, strengthen financial controls, and mitigate risks.

Cabinet acknowledged the projected Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit and noted recent Government announcements regarding support for high needs funding. Members also noted ongoing work to address overspends and improve budget management across services.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet Members:

- A. Ensured emergency action is continued by all Officers during the last quarter of the financial year to improve further the Council's projected year end position. Such action should predominantly focus on reducing spend, increasing income, delivering remaining savings and significant mitigating actions to control in-year spending pressures.

- B. Supported the review of the Operations Boards, which have been in place from August 2025, to ensure these are delivering the greatest impact in terms of challenging spend across the Council. The impact of these boards will continue to inform future Finance Monitoring reports.
- C. Considered the projected spend over budget at Period 9 of £53.261m, adjusted to £50.745m following the release of £2.516m from the Financial Strategy Reserve.
- D. Considered the indicative level of savings delivery at Period 9 of £18.177m (30%).
- E. Considered the projected General Fund Balance of £5m if the Council secures Exceptional Financial Support in 2025/26.
- F. Cabinet Members noted the projected deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant and the approach to reviewing this

130 **Adult Social Care Deferred Payment Policy**

The Portfolio Holder for Social Care presented the report which set out the Council's approach to deferred payment agreements for adult social care, enabling eligible individuals to defer payment of care costs until a later date, in line with statutory guidance.

Members noted that the Policy had been reviewed to ensure compliance with current legislation and to provide clarity and consistency in its application.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet notes and recommends to Council the approval of the updated Deferred Payment Policy in appendix 1;
2. Cabinet noted the following main proposed 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.
 - The charges income is used to reinvest in critical staff roles to manage the increasing demand and complex process, this will ensure efficiencies and clear oversight, providing a more consistent approach and improved experience for clients.

131 **Determination of Admission Arrangements 2027/28**

The Portfolio Holder for Children & Education presented the report which sought Cabinet approval to determine admission arrangements 2027-28 for Shropshire Council's community and voluntary controlled schools.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet determined the proposed admission arrangements 2027 - 2028 for Shropshire's community and voluntary controlled schools as set out in Appendix A to this report and further approved the publication of those arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021 and to the notification of this to parties specified in the Code.

132 Dedication of a Local Nature Reserve at Eardington

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Leisure presented the report which proposed Shropshire Council designate land at Eardington Nature Reserve as a Local Nature Reserve.

Members noted the proposals set out in the report concerning the future management and use of the Nature Reserve, including the financial and environmental implications.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- Approved the declaration of Eardington Local Nature Reserve
- Offered thanks to the work of John Box, the Friends of Eardington Nature Reserve and all other volunteers for their work on the consultation report and for managing this important site.

133 Devolution of Local Services to Town & Parish Councils

The Portfolio Holder for Communities presented the report on the first phase of devolution of local services, focusing on street scene and grounds maintenance.

It was reported that four pilot areas – Shrewsbury, Broseley, Oswestry and Shifnal – had expressed interest in early participation, with varying models of full, partial or enhanced devolution. The approach aimed to support local choice, partnership working and financial sustainability, with funding set at 66% of current costs in year one and a reducing contribution in future years.

Members discussed the nature of the pilot arrangements, the financial implications for both the Council and participating town councils, and the potential impact on staffing, contracts and service standards. Assurance was given that legal agreements were being progressed and that an Operations Board would be established to oversee delivery and partnership working.

Cabinet also considered the position of smaller parish councils and noted that devolution would be voluntary, with different models developed to reflect local capacity and

circumstances. It was acknowledged that the Council would not be able to guarantee the continuation of current discretionary service levels in the future.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approved:

1. The delegation of full or part operational and managerial responsibility for Street Scene services to participating pilot areas
 - Broseley Town Council
 - Oswestry Town Council
 - Shifnal Town Council
 - Shrewsbury Town Council

Delegation of the final terms of the individual arrangements, (to be agreed by the 31st March 2026) to the Service Director for Infrastructure in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Communities and the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment. The commercial terms of the individual arrangements are detailed within section 5 of this report.

2. That an Operations Board is established to meet a minimum of once a year to monitor the operation of the delegated services with joint membership from Shropshire Council and Town Council.

134 Town and Parish Councils Asset Transfer Policy and Process

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report which set out a revised policy and process for the transfer of Council assets to town and parish councils as part of the Council's wider devolution agenda.

Members noted that the revised process would not replace an existing single procedure but would clarify and standardise how asset transfer requests would be considered and progressed.

Discussion highlighted the potential for the policy to support local service delivery, community use of assets and financial sustainability, while recognising that individual transfers would continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Cabinet welcomed the emphasis on partnership working and the flexibility to support different local circumstances.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet approved the Town and Parish Council Asset Transfer Policy, as it provides a transparent and structured framework for transferring suitable council owned assets to Town and Parish councils. (Please see appendix 1 – Town and Parish Council Asset Transfer policy)

2. To delegate to Head of Property and Development, in consultation with the portfolio holders' for Finance and Communities, to authorise the transfer of land and property, in accordance with the policy as set out in 1.

135 Application by Oswestry Town Council for Oswestry Parish to be considered as a Neighbourhood Area

The Portfolio Holder for Communities presented the report which sought approval for the application by Oswestry Town Council for the Parish area of Oswestry to be considered as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agreed the designation of the proposed Neighbourhood Area identified on the map in Appendix A, covering the Parish of Oswestry as an appropriate basis for the development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan and notifies Oswestry Town Council accordingly.

136 Shropshire Schools Funding Formula 2026/27

The Portfolio Holder for Children & Education presented the report which set out how the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant would be distributed to maintained schools and academies in Shropshire.

Cabinet was advised that a briefing note had been circulated to Members providing additional context, including the current position on the Dedicated Schools Grant.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet accepted the recommendation of Shropshire Schools Forum on the funding formula for Shropshire schools for the financial year 2026-27 for maintained schools, and the academic year 2026-27 for academies.

137 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

138 Exempt Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2026 be confirmed as an accurate record.

139 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 11 March 2026.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: