



Committee and Date

Cabinet

15 April 2026

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 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

Councillor Heather Kidd (Leader)

Councillors Heather Kidd, Alex Wagner, Roger Evans, Andy Hall, Ruth Houghton, James Owen, Rob Wilson, Tom Dainty (Substitute) (substitute for David Vasmer) and Benedict Jephcott (Substitute) (substitute for David Walker)

In attendance

Councillors Rosemary Dartnall (Group Leader – Labour), Duncan Kerr (Group Leader – Green & Progressive Independents), Brendan Mallon (Deputy Leader – Reform UK) Andy Boddington (remote), Harry Hancock-Davies, George Hollyhead.

Tanya Miles (Interim Chief Executive), Rachel Robinson (Executive Director for Public Health), Duncan Whitfield (Interim Executive Director S151), Tim Collard (Monitoring Officer), Ashley Kendrick (Democratic Services Officer)

Matt Farmer (Public Health, Biodiversity and Emergency Planning Manager), Jason Hughes (Street Lighting & Traffic Signals Manager), Lynn Parker (Local Nature Recovery Strategy Co-ordinator), Eddie West (Planned Policy & Strategy Manager)

140 Apologies for Absence

Apologies have been received from Councillors Bernie Bentick, David Vasmer (substituted by Tom Dainty), David Walker (substituted by Ben Jephcott).

Apologies were also received from Councillor Dawn Husemann, Group Leader – Reform UK (substituted by Brendan Mallon) and Councillor Dan Thomas, Group Leader – Conservatives.

141 Disclosable Interests

No declarations were received.

142 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2026 be confirmed as an accurate record.

143 Public Question Time

One public question had been received:

Christopher James, in relation to Shrewsbury Railway Gyratory. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Economic Growth stated that there was currently no completion date for the Shrewsbury Railway Station gyratory project as the council was waiting for the results of a road safety audit. This would determine whether additional works were required. The emphasis was on not spending further money until the audit confirms the correct actions, to ensure the scheme was completed properly.

The full question and response can be found on [Response to Public Questions - Cabinet 11.3.26.pdf](#)

144 Member Question Time

Five questions had been received:

Councillor Chris Lemon, in relation to Shrewsbury Bus Station. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder emphasised the need to manage phasing carefully, noting concerns about losing space if development proceeds in the wrong order.

Councillor Andy Boddington, in relation to Ludlow Youth Centre. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder stated there was no reason activities could not resume from July, subject to confirmation from officers. A more specific timeline would be provided outside the meeting.

Councillor Tom Dainty, in relation to Market Drayton Greenfields site. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that Cabinet recognised both immediate investment needs and longer-term aspirations.

Councillor Harry Hancock-Davies, in relation to the risk of fraud. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder argued that a proper business case, authority, and governance framework must be in place before establishing a team, and that officers currently manage fraud risk appropriately.

Councillor George Hollyhead, in relation to Shropshire Hills National Landscape Plan. In response to a supplementary question, the Portfolio Holder reiterated that the plan was widely scrutinised, permissive in nature, and aimed at long-term sustainability, with multiple opportunities for member input before adoption.

The full questions and responses can be found on [Response to Members Questions - Cabinet 11.3.26.pdf](#)

145 Scrutiny Items

There were no scrutiny items.

146 Financial Monitoring Period 10

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report, which outlined the council's financial position at the end of January. The report noted a forecast improvement of £0.801m in the net overspend position, marking the first month in the financial year without a worsening forecast.

Members welcomed the improved clarity and presentation of the report.

In response to concerns raised regarding expenditure on the Northwest Relief Road, Members were advised that this related to necessary remedial works, with no significant further spend anticipated.

Members noted that savings proposals going forward would require clear, realistic delivery plans.

In response to a query, it was stated that the car-parking income variance was primarily due to charges being implemented later in the financial year.

It was noted that financial monitoring discipline and data quality had significantly improved, with a higher proportion of budgets being reported accurately and on time.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- A. Confirmed that the s151 Officer continues to ensure that actions taken by other senior officers under the declared Financial Emergency to reduce the variation from budget at outturn are continued to include the updated Budget, Transformation and Change
- B. Noted the continued use of the Budget, Transformation and Change Panel (formerly the Operations Board) and the Workforce Review Board with a view to enhancing the control of spend and authorisation of projects.
- C. Noted the forecast overspend at Period 10 of £49.944m.
- D. Noted the forecast level of savings to be delivered by the end of the financial year at Period 10 of £17.730m (29.61%).
- E. Noted the forecast General Fund Balance of £5.000m.

147 Counter Fraud Options

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report which outlined options for the delivery of counter-fraud activity. Reference was made to earlier discussion during Members' Questions and to the council's current financial position.

It was emphasised that audit and counter-fraud arrangements should remain officer-led and not subject to political interference.

Members discussed the current absence of a dedicated counter-fraud team, noting that fraud-related activity is currently undertaken across the organisation, including through internal audit. However, work was underway to prepare for the establishment of a dedicated counter-fraud function, including identifying areas of risk and ensuring appropriate governance, authority and constitutional arrangements are in place. It was acknowledged that this must be properly resourced, authorised and sustainable, taking account of the council's financial constraints.

The importance of contract management and procurement controls in reducing fraud risk was highlighted.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet considered the position presented in this report and including the following actions:

- Agreed that the Section 151 officer will prepare a proposal for the 2027/28 budget to create a corporate fraud team, dependent on an appropriate budget being identified.
- Noted the current arrangements for the management of counter fraud activity and fraud related investigations

148 Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Deputy Portfolio Holder for Planning presented the strategy which has been developed over approximately two years with extensive partnership working, including landowners, farming organisations, environmental bodies, local authorities, town and parish councils, and statutory agencies.

Cabinet was advised that the development costs were fully funded by DEFRA, with additional transition funding provided, and that future delivery funding is expected through national grant mechanisms.

Members discussed consultation coverage, engagement with landowners and farmers, long-term funding certainty, and the importance of ensuring the strategy supports viable farming and rural communities.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- a. Noted the work of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Steering Group and stakeholders in supporting co-ordinated biodiversity action, to enable nature recovery across Shropshire.
- b. Approved the LNRS Strategy (subject to parallel approval by Telford and Wrekin Council) and delegated to the Service Director for Strategy & Change, the authority to make minor amendments to the Strategy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder

for Planning, prior to publication and notification to the Secretary of State as required.

149 Shropshire Council response to draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Deputy Portfolio Holder for Planning presented the report which set out the Council's proposed response to the Government's consultation on the draft National Planning Policy Framework. Members were advised that the Council had been granted dispensation to submit its response after the consultation deadline to allow Cabinet approval.

Concerns were raised regarding the lack of clarity around spatial development strategies, including their geography, governance and resourcing.

Members highlighted the importance of ensuring the NPPF properly reflects the rural context, including the needs of hamlets and small villages, social sustainability, and the ability of rural communities to evolve.

Members were advised that the Council's response was broadly positive but sought clarification or amendment in several areas, including:

- The definition of settlements,
- Development outside settlements,
- Tenure flexibility,
- Support for rural business development.

Additional wording was proposed to strengthen references to health and wellbeing as a cross-cutting planning issue, and to reflect social sustainability in rural areas.

Cabinet noted that minor amendments could be made to the response prior to submission, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and it was confirmed that the proposed response would be shared with the Portfolio Holder and Chair before submission.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Approved the submission of the response to the Government's consultation on reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated reforms to the planning system, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
2. Delegated authority to the Service Director for Legal, Governance and Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning to agree any minor additional changes to the Council's response to the consultation ahead of its submission to the Government before 12th March 2026.

150 **The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund - Funding Opportunity**

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Highways & Environment, the Portfolio Holder for Transport & Economic Growth introduced the report which provided an update on the opportunities presented through central Government funding to deliver new electric vehicle (EV) charge points across the County, and to seek approval to pursue those opportunities utilising funding made available by Government.

Members discussed the pace of EV uptake, the importance of matching rollout to demand, and the need to learn from other authorities' experience.

It was confirmed that site selection would involve consultation with local communities, town and parish councils, and use of mapping tools.

Issues raised included affordability, accessibility, equality impacts, grid capacity, pavement crossings, and ensuring infrastructure is located where it can be effectively used.

Cabinet noted the potential long-term income stream from concession arrangements and wider benefits for residents, visitors and air quality.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Approved continued engagement with the Department for Transport (DfT) to draw down the LEVI Fund Capital and Capability funding.
2. Approved the continued delivery of Shropshire's LEVI Fund programme, including preparatory work for the necessary procurement.
3. Delegated authority for all matters relating to the LEVI Fund to the Service Director for Infrastructure, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways & Environment / Transport & Economic Growth, enabling procurement and contracting with a suitable Charge Point Operator.
4. Delegated authority for all matters relating to the EV Pavement Channels Grant to the Service Director for Infrastructure, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways & Environment / Transport & Economic Growth, enabling procurement and contracting with an appropriate hardware and installation provider.

151 **Strategic Partnerships and Spatial Development Strategies**

The Portfolio Holder for Transport & Economic Growth presented the report which outlined new duties on the Council to work collaboratively at a sub-regional level to produce a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) and set out a recommended response to a government consultation on the preferred geographies for completing an SDS.

Members noted the importance of early engagement with partners across appropriate geographies to ensure Shropshire has influence over emerging strategic planning arrangements.

Reference was made to existing partnership working across a range of areas, including economic development, health, policing, transport and cross-border collaboration.

Members were advised that Government consultation on SDS geographies is underway, with a requirement for the Council to submit a response by the end of March.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet agreed to:

1. Delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holders for both Planning and Transport and Economic Growth, responsibility to respond to the Government consultation on SDS geographies by 26th March with a preferred proposal for Shropshire.
2. Delegate to the Chief Executive, and, once appointed, the Executive Director for Communities, Growth & Partnerships, responsibility for undertaking proactive strategic partnership engagement with neighbouring local authorities within England to understand SDS proposals.
3. Delegate to the Chief Executive, and, once appointed, the Executive Director for Communities, Growth & Partnerships, responsibility to undertake proactive strategic partnership engagement with infrastructure providers via formation of a Strategic Infrastructure Forum.
4. Delegate to the Chief Executive, and, once appointed, the Executive Director for Communities, Growth & Partnerships, in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holders for Planning and Transport and Economic Growth, responsibility for taking forward work on the preparation of an SDS, including but not limited to building a strategic planning team to lead the SDS and work alongside the team preparing Shropshire’s Local Plan, in accordance with government requirements and regulations.

152 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 15 April 2026.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:

