



**Audit & Governance  
Committee 25<sup>th</sup> June  
2026**

Item

Public

## Programme Management Office Project Management 2025/26: Management Update

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Paul Clarke, Service Director – Strategy & Change	
email:	<a href="mailto:Paul.clarke@shropshire.gov.uk">Paul.clarke@shropshire.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Alex Wagner	

### 1. Purpose

This report provides the Committee with an update on progress since an internal audit review of project management within the Council's Programme Management Office (PMO). The review, carried out August-September 2025, provided an overall assurance rating of 'limited', along with several recommendations that the service has subsequently responded to. The response is summarised in this report to provide assurance to the Committee that relevant actions and improvements have been made since the audit review.

### 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The scope of the audit review was 'to review the adequacy, effectiveness and consistency of project management within the PMO.' It included the review of governance structures, risk and resource management and performance monitoring, to ensure that projects are delivered on time, within budget, and in alignment with the Council's strategic objectives.
- 2.2. There are four levels of assurance provided by Audit Services: Good, Reasonable, Limited and Unsatisfactory. The Audit review of PMO project management gave an assurance level of 'Limited'. Recommendations are provided in four categories of: Best Practice, Requires Attention, Significant and Fundamental. The Audit of PMO project management made seven recommendations - four of which were categorised as 'significant' and three that 'require attention'. The management response and subsequent action to all recommendations are summarised in Section 4 below.

- 2.3. Significant change has occurred since the review was undertaken, including the development of an organisation Improvement Plan, the arrival of a new Service Director (Strategy & Change), and a wider review of the PMO. All of these have impacted on the role of the PMO over the past few months, and are helping to position and equip it to provide the programme delivery support, governance and assurance, and programme office function the council needs moving forward, to support the scale of transformation and savings it now needs to deliver as part of its financial sustainability. Effective project and programme management will continue to be essential, and the actions taken in response to the audit review will strengthen the arrangements for this.
- 2.4. The Improvement Plan, approved by Full Council in December 2025, includes priority actions and activity that have since developed the role of PMO and the approaches it takes – including:
- development and implementation of a new Improvement Plan governance arrangements (summarised in a previous report to the Committee on 05/02/26)
  - a new monitoring framework including assurance reporting by the PMO
  - a review, refresh and relaunch corporate guidance, standards and templates for project and programme management

### 3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That the Audit & Governance Committee note the updates set out in the report.

## Report

### 4. Response to Audit recommendations

- 4.1. The table below updates members on the progress against each of the Audit recommendations made, providing an update to management responses provided previously:

Recommendation	Management Action	Review Date
<p>The future of the PMO should be agreed by Leadership Board in Autumn 2025, including funding and resourcing. It should then be communicated to all relevant parties, including substantive managers of the seconded officers, to allow for future planning.</p> <p>All staff changes should be approved by the Workforce Board in line with Council processes, where appropriate.</p> <p>Following the departure of the Service Director for Strategy</p>	<p>A new Service Director for Strategy &amp; Change started in January 2026 and secondments and fixed term contracts across the team have been extended for an additional period in order to provide short term stability and allow time for a wider review of the current arrangements, roles and functions so they better align with what the organisation requires going forwards. These extensions were progressed in accordance with relevant council processes and approved by the Workforce Board, and included engagement with substantive managers of seconded officers. A health check by Local Partnerships was commissioned and has helped to inform the review by providing observations on the current</p>	30/09/2026

<p>in September, key duties, including Project Sponsorship, should be reallocated to ensure business continuity</p>	<p>arrangements and proposals for future to ensure they are in line with best practices.</p>	
<p>Following the cross-council review of project management being led by the PMO, a consistent approach and structure should be adopted council-wide for project management, and a central register should be maintained to allow for oversight and the planning of resources required from other teams. This should be finalised in conjunction with other project management teams across the Authority and clear, strategic direction should be provided Council-wide to ensure consistency.</p> <p>Clear responsibility for updating savings lines (non PMO projects) on the Pipeline Scoring Matrix should be agreed and communicated. Monitoring of updates to the Pipeline should then be allocated and missing information followed up for the savings lines. The tasks within the monitoring role could be shared between the PMO and Finance to ensure there is no duplication and consistency across departments.</p> <p>Accurate and up to date savings information is key for the Council's financial planning.</p>	<p>Programme 6 of the Council's Improvement Programme includes a commitment to <i>Review, refresh and relaunch corporate guidance, standards and templates for project and programme management.</i></p> <p>A review of PMO guidance, standards and templates has now been completed. Re-establishing the cross council Project Management Community, once the new PMO structure and arrangements have been confirmed, will be an opportunity for all project management practitioners and teams across the Council to share best practice and work towards a consistent corporate approach and standards.</p> <p>A process for monitoring all benefits, including savings, is currently being developed by the PMO in partnership with Finance, for all proposals agreed through the Budget Transformation and Change Review Panel.</p>	30/09/2026
<p>A review of project and programme management guidance documents should be carried out to ensure they are reflective of current practice and in particular the introduction and use of the PMO SharePoint site.</p>	<p>A review of PMO guidance, standards, procedures and templates has now been completed in accordance with our Improvement Plan. They now need launching, promoting and embedding across the organisation at an appropriate time to align with future PMO arrangements.</p>	30/09/2026
<p>The Gateway approvals process, including the approvals board, should be defined and documented. Membership of the approvals board should be</p>	<p>The Budget Transformation and Change Review Panel has now been established and will fulfil the requirements of a gateway process. A central Projects Register and Benefits Register has been developed and is managed and</p>	As part of monthly reporting cycle to Transformation & Change Board, at Leadership Board.

<p>representative of each directorate and to include a project management specialist(s). All projects should then be presented for approval by the Board and decisions should be recorded.</p> <p>All relevant approval should be documented within the Master Project Document (MPD) for each project.</p>	<p>maintained by the PMO to track all transformation and change projects, the organisational investment made in those (including transformation funding and enabling services support), and the anticipated return in terms of benefits and savings.</p>	
<p>All stakeholders for projects should be identified and documented within the MPD, alongside details of how they will be communicated with, including frequency, delivery and required content. This will improve accountability and aid decision making.</p> <p>Any changes to stakeholders should be reflected in the MPD.</p>	<p>A stakeholder register has been created to go with the project artifact. Accountable and responsible officers are listed on the Projects and Benefits Registers. Benefits tracking and monitoring by the PMO will ensure that there is regular engagement and communication with those stakeholders.</p>	30/09/2026
<p>All PMO project risks should be included in reporting to Audit Committee.</p> <p>To enable this, all required details for project risks should be captured in a reportable format, defined between the PMO and the Risk &amp; Business Continuity Officer.</p> <p>Details should include risk rating, exposure and implementation date of mitigating actions and opportunities as well as risks, in line with the Opportunity Risk Management Strategy.</p> <p>Recommendation to be addressed in conjunction with the Risk &amp; Business Continuity Officer</p>	<p>Risk ratings are aligned, central location has been created for use by all of the PMO team and trial use has begun. Portfolio Managers and the Risk &amp; Business Continuity Officer are working cooperatively and collaboratively on this and will review any further amendments.</p>	30/09/2026
<p>An actual income to date column should be added to the Pipeline and populated for each project, where applicable.</p> <p>Where possible the data should be linked to the MTFS savings data held by finance</p>	<p>This has been superseded by the Budget Transformation and Change Review Panel arrangements which include a benefits monitoring process, being developed by the PMO and Finance in partnership to ensure a single version of figures including return on investment, income assumptions and non-financial benefits</p>	30/09/2026

to ensure accuracy and consistency. This would allow for an overall view of all PMO-driven income.		
--	--	--

## 5. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 5.1. This is an information report providing the Committee with details of the work undertaken by the Programme Management Office in response to the Audit and therefore a risk assessment and opportunities appraisal has not been carried out

## 6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## 7. Climate Change Appraisal

- 7.1. There are no anticipated direct climate change or environmental impacts associated with the recommendations in this report.

## 8. Background

- 8.1. The PMO was established at Shropshire Council in 2023 as part of a broader transformation under the Council's new operating model, with the primary role of supporting transformation projects across the Council. This was driven by the need to become a more agile, efficient and future-ready organisation in response to financial pressures and evolving local government demands. The PMO now also has a key role in the governance and assurance of the Improvement Plan.
- 8.2. The Audit was undertaken at a time of significant change – including the departure of the Service Director for Strategy in September, the ending of a strategic transformation partner arrangement, the declaration of a financial emergency by Cabinet, and the subsequent development of an organisational improvement plan. The scope of the Audit was focussed on specific elements of operational practice of the PMO role rather than the strategic role of PMO in the delivery and assurance of service transformation, organisational improvement, and savings and benefits realisation.
- 8.3. The Council's Leadership Board are committed to the continuation and further development of a PMO function, recognising the important role it plays in supporting and assuring the delivery of service transformation, organisational improvement and financial savings. Key activities related to the Improvement Plan, Budget Transformation and Change Review Panel and the Council's portfolio of transformation require key involvement from the PMO going forwards. This will help to establish the role of the team within the organisation and the key processes required.

## 9. Conclusions

- 9.1. There has been both action to address issues raised by the audit recommendations and also a changing operating context since the audit was undertaken, including the development of an Improvement Plan and the Budget, Transformation and Change Review Panel both of which have shaped the development of the PMO role, focus and approaches.

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

[Report to full Council 11/12/25](#)

[Improvement Plan](#)

**Local Member:** N/A

**Appendices** [Please list the titles of Appendices]