



Senior Leadership Structure & Senior Appointments Report

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Heather Kidd - Leader	
Lead Director:	Tanya Miles, Chief Executive	
Service Area:	Chief Executive's Office	
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Electoral Divisions Affected	All Divisions	
Key Decision?	Not Key Decision	
Cabinet Forward Plan	Not Applicable	
Report considered by	Full Council – 24 September 2026	

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report sets out the revised senior leadership structure for the council.

1.2 As the council's Head of Paid Service, the Chief Executive has a statutory duty to advise on and deliver the structures, roles and staff numbers necessary to deliver our services effectively and efficiently, within the available financial envelope, both now and in the future.

1.3 The report sets out the approach to recruitment to statutory chief officer posts within the structure and recommends confirmation of successful candidates.

2. Recommendations

2.1 In accordance with Article 12.2(a) of Part 2 of the Constitution, Council receives this report of the Head of Paid Service outlining the new staffing structure of the Council, including the number and grades of posts in the senior management team that will enable delivery of the Corporate Plan, Improvement Plan and effectively discharge the functions that the council is responsible for (see Appendix A for the new structure chart).

2.2 It is recommended that Council confirms the appointments to the statutory chief officer posts of:

- Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) - Chris Atherton
- Corporate Director Growth & Connected Communities – Helen Martin
- Corporate Director Change & Improvement – Jo Brown

2.3 It is recommended that Council notes the appointments to non-statutory chief officer posts of:

- Service Director Housing – Ravi Kaur Phull
- Service Director Inclusive Education, Family Help & Skills – Amanda Smith

2.4 It is recommended that Council agrees the updated Senior Officer Employment Procedure to align with the new structure and roles (Appendix B).

3. Background

3.1 Following the permanent appointment to the Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service role, in June 2026, a revised senior management structure has been created to provide capacity and capability at a strategic level.

3.2 Delivery of the Council's plans will only be possible if the gaps identified through the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) are addressed. Both the CPC and Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) Review made strong recommendations to strengthen and add capacity at a senior leadership level. Delivery of an ambitious whole-council transformation programme over the next 4-5 years is critical in achieving financial sustainability and ultimately reducing reliance on exceptional financial support.

3.3 A strong senior management structure with the right capability and capacity ensures the council has the leadership, accountability and resource to deliver its priorities at pace, maintain financial control and provide confidence to members, residents and government.

3.4 Following a competitive procurement exercise Faerfield Executive Recruitment agency was chosen to lead the external recruitment to the six statutory and non-statutory chief officer roles within the structure. The timeline of search is shown below:

Executive search commenced	11 June (4-5 weeks). Vacancies closed between 8 – 15 July.
Longlisting	w/c 13 July
Technical Interviews	w/c 20 July
Shortlisting	w/c 27 July
Assessment Centres	w/c 10 & 17 August
Final Panel Interviews	w/c 17, 24 & 31 August

3.5 The assessment centres comprised stakeholder panels, people panel, values-based panel, media exercise (for two roles), meet and greet with the Leadership Board and members. The outcomes from the assessments informed the final interview.

3.6 As required by the Senior Officer Employment procedure, the statutory chief officer roles have been appointed to by the Chief Officer Employment Panel made up of the three main political parties (or their nominees), and two other members subject to proportionality rules, the Chief Executive, Head of Paid Services and the Service Director Enabling (or their deputy). For the non-statutory chief officer posts, the recruitment was led by the Chief Executive with representation from members and the relevant portfolio holder(s) as appropriate.

3.7 The outcome of the recruitment process was as follows:

Corporate Director Growth & Connected Communities:

- 20 Applicants, 7 Longlisted and 4 Shortlisted for assessment centre/final interview
- Helen Martin is recommended for appointment. Helen currently works as Director of Communities and Place at Cotswold District Council and has previously held the role of Director of Regeneration at Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.

Corporate Director Change & Improvement:

- 21 Applicants, 6 Longlisted and 2 Shortlisted for assessment centre/final interview
- Jo Brown is recommended for appointment. Jo has recently worked as a consultant with Leeds City Council advising on major transformation programmes and budget sustainability and has previously held roles at Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (Assistant Chief Executive) and Cheshire East Council (Director of Transformation).

Director of Adult Services (DASS):

- 5 Applicants, 5 Longlisted and 1 Shortlisted for assessment centre/final interview
- Chris Atherton is recommended for appointment. Chris is currently Strategic Director, Adult Social Care & Health at Nottingham City Council and has previously held roles in adult social care at Haringey Council.

Corporate Director Finance & Governance (S151):

Unfortunately, no appointment was made to the Corporate Director Finance & Governance (S151) and this post will be re-advertised shortly. The current interim S151 Officer contract has been extended.

Service Director Housing:

- 10 Applicants, 5 Longlisted and 3 Shortlisted for assessment centre/final interview
- Ravi Kaur Phull is appointed. Ravi is currently Head of Service – Strategic Housing and Regeneration at Telford & Wrekin Council and has previously held roles in housing at Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council, as well as working in environmental health at Wolverhampton City Council.

Service Director Inclusive Education, Family Help & Skills:

- 7 Applicants, 4 Longlisted and 3 Shortlisted for assessment centre/final interview
- Amanda Smith is appointed. Amanda is currently Head of Service for Early Intervention, Youth and Community at Swindon Borough Council. She has previously held roles in early help, residential social work at Cornwall and Somerset Councils.

4. Summary of Main Proposals

4.1 The report proposes that Council receives the revised senior leadership structure, developed by the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service, to provide the capacity, capability and accountability needed to deliver the Corporate Plan, Improvement Plan and council transformation programme.

4.2 Council is asked to confirm appointments to the statutory chief officer posts of Director of Adult Social Services, Corporate Director Growth & Connected Communities, and Corporate Director Change & Improvement, following an external recruitment process supported by Faerfield Executive Recruitment.

4.3 Council is also asked to note appointments to the non-statutory chief officer posts of Service Director Housing and Service Director Inclusive Education, Family Help & Skills, alongside the intention to re-advertise the Corporate Director Finance & Governance (S151) post following an unsuccessful appointment process.

4.4 Appointment to these key leadership positions demonstrates real progress against the recommendations of both the CPC and CIPFA review.

5. Alternative Options

5.1 Council could choose not to approve the recommendations contained within the report, however given the need to increase senior Officer capacity, the legislative requirements to ensure statutory officer posts are filled and the work required as part of the Council's improvement plan, this option is not recommended.

6. Key risks and Opportunities

6.1 A lack of senior leadership capacity and capability is not simply an organisational issue it is a financial risk in its own right. Without sufficient strategic leadership, organisations struggle to control spending, deliver transformation, make timely decisions, maintain governance and retain confidence of staff, members and the public.

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
Failure to deliver the Financial Strategy and Improvement Plan	Recruit to critical leadership positions quickly to ensure sufficient capacity and reduction in reliance on key individuals. Prioritise activities with the greatest financial and organisational impact. Bring in external expertise and experience to support delivery of plans at pace. Create protected capacity for recovery work separating from day-to-day operational pressures so leaders can focus on stabilisation and transformation.	Recruitment & Retention
Poor financial decision making due to lack of strategic oversight, delayed decisions, inadequate challenge and missed opportunities		Financial Sustainability
Loss of organisational control and governance leading to an increased risk of governance failures		Financial sustainability
Inability to deliver transformation at pace, slowing implementation and benefits realisation.		Financial sustainability
Burnout and loss of key people as existing leaders become overloaded, increased sickness absence, turnover and loss of corporate memory.		Employee wellbeing/recruitment and retention
Unable to recruit to posts in a challenging recruitment market.	Use of executive search agency to reach potential candidates, strong media campaign through multiple channels.	Recruitment & Retention

6.2 Key opportunities include the injection of additional capacity, capability, skills and experience to deliver the council transformation programme, achieve financial sustainability and ultimately reducing reliance on exceptional financial support.

7. Council Priorities

7.1 A strong senior management structure is critical to ensuring that the council delivers on its ambitions to be sustainable, resilient and together. Senior Officers are

responsible for delivering the Council's priorities within available resources, supporting services to reduce demand, improve outcomes and operate more sustainably. The recommendations in this report support all of the Council's priorities set out in the Council's Improvement Plan and Shropshire Council Corporate Plan.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The senior management structure and appointment to key posts is a critical enabler of the Council's financial sustainability and Medium Term Financial Plan. It is expected to make a material contribution to the Council's medium term financial position by managing demand, improving efficiency effectiveness, supporting transformation and change, and ensuring sustainable service delivery.

8.2 Funding for the senior management structure is through a combination of base budget and transformation funding. One off recruitment costs have been covered through transformation funding.

9. Legal and HR implications

9.1 Recruitment to posts within the senior leadership structure has been undertaken in accordance with the Senior Officer Employment Procedure, taking account of the requirements set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

10. Electoral Division Implications

10.1 Not applicable.

11. Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

11.1 Not applicable.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1 There are no climate change, biodiversity and environmental implications arising from this report.

14. Background Papers

- 14.1. Shropshire Council Corporate Plan (2026)
- 14.2. Improvement Plan
- 14.3. Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC)

15. Appendices

- Appendix A – Senior Management Structure
- Appendix B – Senior Officer Employment Procedure