

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report



May 2025 to May 2026

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Foreword

We are pleased to introduce this Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2025/26. An annual report should be an opportunity to share and highlight difference that overview and scrutiny has made, provide examples of the work done and recommendations and impact that has been achieved.

The report reflects a year in which scrutiny has played an increasingly important role in supporting the Council develop improved governance, providing effective challenge and supporting better decision-making across Shropshire Council. Following the local elections in May 2025, the Council welcomed a significant number of newly elected Members, many taking up public office for the first time. This created both an opportunity and a responsibility to reset, strengthen and clarify the role of Overview and Scrutiny so that all Members could contribute confidently.

During 2025/26, Members from across political groups have worked together as an apolitical critical friend, helping to test assumptions, examine evidence, bring local insight into policy development and hold decision-makers to account. This has been especially important during a period of significant financial challenge, where difficult choices have required robust governance, early engagement and a clear focus on long-term sustainability.

Stronger arrangements, including the Scrutiny, Audit and Governance Chairs Group, have helped improve coordination between Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Audit and Governance Committee and Cabinet. These arrangements have supported earlier consideration of key decisions, strengthened work programming, and helped ensure that scrutiny activity is directed towards the areas where it can add greatest value. The development of clearer protocols, practical toolkits and accessible resources has also provided Members with stronger foundations for effective scrutiny.

Our overview and scrutiny committees considered a range of topics within their remits that focused on the delivery of the council's priorities, and increasingly through the year, taking account of the Financial Emergency that was declared by Cabinet in September 2025. Work included following up on previously agreed recommendations, holding decision makers to account e.g. through quarterly performance management and financial management reports, and carrying policy development and review and pre-decision scrutiny e.g. Highways Contract Review, Health in All Policies – Planning, and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

We would like to thank all Members, officers, partners and witnesses who have contributed to Overview and Scrutiny during 2025/26. Their time, expertise and constructive challenge have helped strengthen the Council's approach and improve the quality of debate. As we look ahead to 2026/27, the task is to build on this progress: embedding stronger links with the Corporate Plan, Improvement Plan and financial sustainability work; continuing to focus scrutiny where it can have the greatest impact; and ensuring that the voice of residents continues to inform the choices the Council makes.

Cllr David Minnery – Chair of the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chair of the Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committee Chairs Group 2025/26

Cllr Ed Potter – Chair of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chair of the Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committee Chairs Group 2026/27

Developing Overview and Scrutiny through the year

The backward-looking External Assurance Review (May 2026) carried out by CIPFA for MHCLG identified that Scrutiny should be improved. The improvements and developments described in this annual report set out the overview and scrutiny journey through 2025/26. This is continual learning that will take place through 2026/27 and beyond.

The 2025 local elections marked an important reset point for Overview and Scrutiny at Shropshire Council. With a significant number of newly elected councillors, many taking on a role in local politics for the first time, there was a clear need to rebuild confidence, clarify expectations and strengthen the way scrutiny operates across the Council.

Support began with an all-Member induction, giving new and returning councillors a shared understanding of scrutiny's role as an apolitical, evidence-led "critical friend". This helped Members understand how Overview and Scrutiny can influence policy, hold decision-makers to account, test evidence and amplify the voice of residents.

A number of practical developments supported this work. The Enabling Effective Overview and Scrutiny SharePoint pages were developed through the Member Gateway, bringing together induction material, toolkits, templates, best practice guidance and links to wider resources in one accessible place. A separate Task and Finish Group page also made it easier for Members to see what work was underway and observe meetings where appropriate.

Improving the coordination between Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the Audit and Governance Committee and Cabinet

The focus then shifted from induction to embedding the structures, relationships and ways of working needed for effective scrutiny. Cross-party Chairs and Vice-Chairs were appointed and the council strengthened the coordination of activity across committees creating the Scrutiny, Audit and Governance Chairs Group, drawing on learning from other councils. This group brings together the Overview and scrutiny committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs, the Chair of Audit and Governance, Group Leaders, statutory officers and scrutiny support officers together in a regular forum. This provided a clearer structure for discussing work programmes, emerging risks, Council priorities, opportunities for joint working, referrals to Audit and Governance Committee and the continuous improvement of scrutiny practice.

The group marked a shift from committee-by-committee planning towards a more strategic, organisation-wide model of scrutiny. It created a visible leadership space where Members could consider the collective impact of Overview and Scrutiny across the Council, strengthen links with Audit and Governance, and ensure that scrutiny remained independent while being better connected to executive decision-making. This was particularly important as the Council responded to the financial emergency and needed scrutiny activity to be more coordinated, timely and focused on areas of greatest organisational risk and value.

Several practical outputs supported this change. Benchmarking and horizon scanning with other local authorities, including those that had experienced government intervention, informed the development of stronger local arrangements. An Audit/Scrutiny Protocol and Cabinet/Scrutiny Protocol were produced, clarifying how scrutiny, audit and the executive should work together in their different roles. The Terms of Reference for the Group also formalised its purpose, including driving continuous improvement, identifying opportunities to

increase scrutiny effectiveness, aligning committee activity, sharing good practice, encouraging Member engagement and reviewing how scrutiny adds value to Council decision-making.

Evening meetings were introduced in recognition of the changing profile of elected Members, including those balancing council responsibilities with full-time employment. This was an important step in supporting wider participation and making scrutiny more accessible and responsive.

As the year progressed, the Council's financial emergency became a defining theme. Scrutiny needed to be more coordinated, flexible and focused on the areas where it could add most value. Work programmes were adjusted to apply a financial emergency lens, supporting difficult decisions, organisational improvement and sustainable service delivery. This led to stronger governance arrangements, including Cabinet/Scrutiny and Audit/Scrutiny protocols, and the Chairs Group was developed into the Scrutiny, Audit and Governance Chairs Group. Pre-decision scrutiny was also strengthened so that Members could engage earlier with key issues aligned to Cabinet timescales, influence proposals before decisions were taken and support more responsive decision-making.

The new group provided a stronger cross-party mechanism for oversight, coordination and continuous improvement. Its Terms of Reference clarified the role of Members in sharing work programmes, identifying cross-cutting issues, encouraging engagement, triangulating evidence and improving scrutiny practice.

Choosing the right topics

A key component to effective overview and scrutiny work is the identification and scoping of the right topics to be included in the committee work programmes. The focus was upon ensuring that Overview and Scrutiny activity aligned with corporate priorities, emerging risks, major policy developments and the Council's response to the financial emergency. Our Overview and Scrutiny resources are finite and therefore must be directed towards those areas where Members can add the greatest value through review, challenge and policy development.

"Short, sharp and to the point. Focused. Well chaired and had a clear objective. Many other relevant thoughts and important areas to look at were identified and noted for future work but the focus remained. I felt it was an effective use of my time."

Task and Finish Group Member work in 2025/26

The Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit, [Shropshire Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit.docx](#), contains guidance around identification and focus of work programme topics.

Overview and Scrutiny topics should not be developed in isolation, therefore increasingly throughout the year, open and transparent dialogue between officers, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Members has helped in shaping the prioritisation and timeliness of appropriate topics for review.

Having worked well in 2025 this approach has been continued in 2026, with a half day joint strategic work programming session for all Committees, key officers, and Cabinet organised

for the 9th June 2026. The aim is that the relationship will evolve towards a model where senior officers increasingly see Scrutiny not simply as a point of accountability, but as a source of insight, challenge and improvement.

Introducing an overarching key theme

The significance of the Council's Financial Emergency prompted a change in how Overview and Scrutiny approached its work across committees. The Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Chairs Group confirmed that Overview and Scrutiny Committees should apply a financial emergency lens across their work programmes as they review their topics. Committees discussed the need to adjust committee work programmes, identify common themes and develop consistent lines of enquiry that could be applied across all Overview and Scrutiny activity, with the financial emergency being the key theme applied to everything undertaken.



What the committees have done in 2025/26

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee sets its own work programme based on topics that they identify and prioritise. Some of these topics are in the form of regular reports that are considered each quarter or annually and allow the committees to maintain a consistent view of key issues. This allows the committee to identify topics that they could add value to by taking a deeper dive and/or the opportunity to share points and recommendations with Cabinet to inform their work.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Topic	Frequency
Transformation and Improvement	Corporate Performance Report	Quarterly
	Financial Monitoring Report	Quarterly
Economy and Environment	Shropshire Community Safety Partnership Annual Report	Annually
People	Adult Social Care Performance report	Quarterly
	Children's Services Performance Report	Quarterly

In addition to the above examples of standing items, the Committees have also carried out a range of investigations and reviews through 2025/26. They have also requested a number of member briefings to help them better understand topics and issues to inform their work and protect the time in their committee meetings for overview and scrutiny.

Committees used a range of different approaches to inform and carry out their work. Unlike a formal committee meeting, which can cover multiple agenda items within a limited timeframe, Member Briefings, whole committee working and Task and Finish Groups can focus on a single issue in depth, and over a number of sessions.

All-Member Briefings enable Members to build a deeper understanding of a topic; it may be from these that potential Task and Finish Group topics can emerge.

Whole committee working allows all members of the committee to come together to collectively explore topics in greater detail and develop their findings and recommendations which will be reported back through the formal committee meeting.

The Task and Finish Group setting enables Members to delve further and explore root causes, examine evidence in detail, speak to key witnesses and receive briefings on more specific topics and issues, undertake site visits, and consider a wider range of options before reaching conclusions. They also report their findings back to a formal committee meeting.

"I'd say this all worked very well and if other groups are similarly structured and managed, they should be equally effective. A much better and more effective use of member and officers time than committee meetings."

Member feedback following 2025/26 Task and Finish Group work

Adding value to decision-making

Overview and Scrutiny is an integral part of the Council's wider policy development and decision-making processes. Cabinet recognises that whilst overview and scrutiny committees retain ownership of their work programmes, the Council benefits when policy development and scrutiny are linked in a structured and transparent way that allows Members from across the council to contribute the knowledge and experience to decision making. During the year committees have increasingly been reviewing topics ahead of decisions being taken and move at pace to facilitate carrying out work that supports meeting the challenges of the financial emergency.

An early example was the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked by the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Environment to consider potential approaches for a review of the Highways contract. The committee commissioned a rapid Task and Finish Group to review the immediate future of the Highways Contract carrying out a very focussed and detailed piece of work. As a result of their research and the cross-party group were able to formulate robust evidence-based recommendations. This was the first piece of overview and scrutiny work carried out following the 2025 Local Elections, and members of that Task and Finish Group fed back on their positive experience of the work.

"We were working to a tight deadline ... stuck to the 'apolitical critical friend' brief well.... Officers supporting the work did a great job ... Overall, a very positive experience."

Other examples of the pre-decision approach during 2025/26 include the Community Infrastructure Levy Task and Finish Group carried out by the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee that its finding should be shared to align with Local Plan discussions and to inform future decisions.

Children's Services Reforms were considered by the People OSC where members engaged with service transformation at an early stage, rather than after delivery. This including the national reform proposals covering Families First Partnership, Family Hubs, Youth Strategy and SEND Reform. Members tested assumptions and highlighted issues including transport barriers, the role of community facilities and the importance of partnership working before implementation progressed.

The value of this approach was also reflected in Cabinet's consideration of the Health in All Policies Task and Finish Group report, where the contribution scrutiny had made to shaping wider policy thinking was recognised:

"Members welcomed the report as a comprehensive and valuable piece of scrutiny work, with particular support for its emphasis on prevention and the links between planning, housing and health outcomes. Comments highlighted the importance of embedding health considerations more broadly across policy areas, whilst acknowledging that the Task and Finish Group had necessarily focused on planning." Minutes of the 10 June 2026 Cabinet.

Over the year there has been increasing recognition that Overview and Scrutiny work adds greater value when it is involved early on in the development of policy and strategy, rather than solely reviewing outcomes after decisions have been made. Pre-decision scrutiny also

provides the opportunity for a wider selection of Members from across the Council to contribute their knowledge, experience and expertise to help inform decision-making. This approach has put Overview and Scrutiny at the heart of the Council's policy development and review approach, as a tool to help to shape thinking, test assumptions and improve proposals before formal decisions are made.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees will not be able to consider every decision before Cabinet takes them – they would not add value in all cases, and there would be a risk that it adds additional work and could slow down the process. The identification of the right forthcoming decisions that would benefit from pre-scrutiny is key. The Cabinet/Scrutiny protocol helps to set out the relationship between the committees and provides some guidance in relation to handling pre-decision/pre-scrutiny.

Overview and Scrutiny - contributing to developing key strategic plans

2025/26 has seen the development of key strategic plans for the Council, and Overview and Scrutiny Committees have contributed. As the committee that leads of corporate matters the developing Improvement Plan was brought to Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The committee also had input into the development of the Corporate Plan and helped to shape the Corporate Plan key performance indicators that now form the basis of quarterly performance reporting. These plans were also the subject of Member briefings. Another key strategic plan that has been considered by the committee was the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which was considered on its journey to Council for agreement.

Summary of 2025/26 for each Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee

During 2025/26, the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee delivered clear outcomes through the establishment of cross-party Task and Finish Groups on Community Infrastructure Levy governance and partnership working. These reviews created stronger evidence bases for decision-making, promoted greater transparency in how infrastructure funding is allocated, and generated practical recommendations to improve reporting, communication, member involvement and local accountability. The Committee's focus on CIL also improved understanding of how town and parish councils and communities can access funding, supporting more consistent engagement and better local influence over infrastructure priorities. Through its consideration of local partnership approaches the Committee helped contribute learning and insights from conversations with Town and Parish Councils in different areas of Shropshire to inform the opportunities for the development of the devolution of services to those who were interested in taking them forwards.

Alongside these areas of work, it maintained scrutiny of the Council's corporate performance, financial performance and governance arrangements, as well as contributing to the development of the Council's Improvement Plan, Corporate Plan and the Performance Management Framework measures. The overall impact was a stronger scrutiny contribution to improvement, accountability and transformation, with Members providing challenge at an

earlier stage, helping to shape future decisions, and reinforcing a clear focus on outcomes, transparency and better services for residents.

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee delivered a work programme centred on interdependent issues with strategic impact, including highways, waste services and food waste collection, Sports Village development, community safety, economic growth, flooding and transport infrastructure. This helped direct scrutiny effort towards areas where recommendations could influence future policy and service delivery.

The Committee carried out focused pre-decision Task and Finish work on the Highways Contract Review, and a rapid Task and Finish Group focused on learning from the Shrewsbury Station Gyratory project, making recommendations to Cabinet, and followed up on progress with delivering the agreed recommendations from a previous scrutiny investigation on Developer Contributions. The Committee also heard a petition for a Skateboard Facility and Pump Track in Oswestry and recommended to Cabinet that it be passed to the relevant Portfolio Holder to explore the most appropriate route for transferring the land to Oswestry Town Council.

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

During 2025/26, the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided challenge and oversight across some of the Council's most significant demand-led services. Members scrutinised rising SEND demand, High Needs DSG pressures, children's placement costs and increasing Adult Social Care demand, helping to strengthen understanding of the relationship between service performance, demand and financial sustainability.

The Committee also undertook early scrutiny of national Children's Services reforms, including Families First, Family Hubs, Youth Strategy and SEND Reform, influencing discussions before implementation and ensuring local issues such as transport, accessibility and partnership working were considered. Through regular performance monitoring and targeted Member briefings, the Committee strengthened accountability, improved Member understanding of complex service areas and supported evidence-based decision-making to improve outcomes for Shropshire residents.

Their work included applying the lens of the Financial Emergency to their work including considering the High Needs DSG pressures, including a £41m deficit, alongside growth in SEND demand, Adult Social Care demand and self-funder related demand pressures, and children's placement pressures. These discussions enabled scrutiny to examine the relationship between performance, demand and financial sustainability across demand-led high-pressure service areas.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee focused on prevention, health inequalities and the impact of policy decisions on residents' health and wellbeing. Members undertook a detailed review of Health in All Policies and Planning through the commissioning of a Task

and Finish Group, gathering evidence from a wide range of stakeholders to explore how planning, housing and the built environment can support healthier communities. The Committee also scrutinised emerging NHS service developments, including the review of Primary Care Locally Commissioned Services, ensuring that issues such as rural access, community engagement and the shift towards community-based care were considered. Through evidence-led inquiry and constructive challenge, the Committee strengthened understanding of the wider determinants of health and helped ensure that residents' needs remained central to discussions on future service and policy development.

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided oversight of significant NHS service developments affecting residents across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin. Working jointly across both local authorities, the Committee scrutinised the Hospital Transformation Programme, proposals for closer collaboration between local NHS trusts, developments in primary care and out-of-hours services, winter planning arrangements, and wider system planning for health services. Through constructive engagement with NHS partners, the Committee examined the potential impact of proposed changes on service accessibility, patient pathways, community provision and workforce resilience, helping to ensure that the interests of local communities were reflected in discussions relating to the future delivery of health services across the area.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY 2025/26 AT A GLANCE



Supporting better governance, effective challenge and informed decision-making across Shropshire Council.



57

Committee Memberships



22

Formal Committee Meetings



43

Individual Scrutiny Members



56

Reviews, Investigations & Briefings



346

Member Involvements



20

Recommendations Made



16

Recommendations Submitted to Cabinet



100%

Recommendations Accepted by Cabinet



Overview and Scrutiny helping to shape policy, improve governance and amplify the voice of Shropshire communities throughout 2025/26.

The table below sets out the range of investigative topics and various approaches covered by committees, including work carried out between Committee meetings.

Topic	Approach	Lead Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Link
Member Bullying and Harassment	Task and Finish Group	Transformation and Improvement	• Member Bullying & Harassment  PDF 231 KB • Report of the Member Bullying and Harassment Task and Finish group , item 9. PDF 651 KB
Health in All Policies and Planning	Task and Finish Group	Health	• https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s44727/HOSC%20-%20Health%20in%20All%20report.pdf
Highways Contract Review	Rapid Task and Finish Group	Economy and Environment	Exempt item
Oswestry Skateboard and Pump Track	Petition heard at Committee followed by E&E report to Cabinet	Economy and Environment	• Scrutiny Item - Skateboard Facility and Pump Track Petition - recommendation from Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee  PDF 250 KB
Partnership Working	Task and Finish Group	Transformation and Improvement	• Report of the Partnership Working Task and Finish Group  PDF 241 KB • APPENDIX ONE - Report of the Partnership Working Task and Finish Group - T&I 17.11.2025 , item 30. PDF 401 KB • Partnership Working Task & Finish Group  PDF 227 KB • Report of the Partnership Working Task and Finish Group - Appendix One - 09.02.2026 , item 62. PDF 385 KB • https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/ielssueDetails.aspx?IId=34372&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI26161
Staff Bullying and Harassment	Update against actions from	Transformation and Improvement	• Staff Bullying and Harassment Task and Finish Group update  PDF 410 KB

	a previous Task and Finish Group		• Staff Bullying & Harassment T&F Group Update PDF 556 KB
Station Gyratory	Rapid Task and Finish Group	Economy and Environment	• Scrutiny Item – Report of the Station Gyratory (LUF2) Task & Finish Group PDF 265 KB • APPENDIX ONE - Station Gyratory Task and Finish Group Report , item 86a PDF 310 KB • https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=1927
Community Infrastructure Levy	Task and Finish Group	Transformation and Improvement	• Part One Report of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Task and Finish Group PDF 282 KB • APPENDIX ONE - Part One Report of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Task and Finish Group , item 70 PDF 774 KB
Artificial Intelligence	All-Member Briefing	Transformation and Improvement	Artificial Intelligence Briefings
Adult Social Care	All-Member Briefing	People	Adult Social Care Briefings
Blue Badge	All-Member Briefing	People	Blue Badge Overview
Community and Family Hubs	All-Member Briefing	People	Community and Family Hubs Briefings
Carbon Monitoring Report	All-Member Briefing	Economy and Environment	Carbon Monitoring Report 2025
Renters Rights	All-Member Briefing	People	Renters Rights
Healthwatch Shropshire	All-Member Briefing	Health	Health and Wellbeing
SEND Transport	All-Member Briefing	People	SEND Transport
Leisure Contract Procurement	All-Member Briefing	Economy and Environment	Leisure Contract Procurement
Waste Contract	All-Member Briefing	Economy and Environment	Waste Briefings

The following case studies provide greater detail as to some of the Task and Finish Group work undertaken in the 2025/26 year:

Station Gyratory Case Study



Purpose: Further to public concern, including a live petition with more than 6,000 signatures, and after discussions with the Leader and Deputy Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Economic Growth asked that the Chair of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider investigation of the Station Gyratory project.

Context: The management, development and delivery of the Station Gyratory project had been complicated and highly controversial, mainly due to technical issues such as changing established traffic routes in the town's congested medieval centre. The rapid Task and Finish Group reviewed the project from bid to inception, including stakeholder engagement, future risks and opportunities, grant-funding implications and lessons to guide current and future projects.

How: Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members agreed that the rapid Task and Finish Group review should be undertaken as a priority. As part of the investigation, witnesses were invited including emergency services, local businesses and key stakeholders. Evidence was received in person and through written submissions, and Members considered this during a full-day session focused on the project background, design and build phases, wider context and public concerns.

Outcome: As part of their conclusions, the Group reviewed the process flow to identify the problem the project was intended to solve and whether it had met that purpose. Members felt that the need had been driven by receipt of the grant and the requirement to submit the application and deliver the scheme quickly. The Group has continued to track progress of the project and its recommendations, with its most recent report including a request for Cabinet to explore options around reversion of the scheme to two lanes of traffic.

Factors contributing to success: This was a detailed and thorough piece of work by a highly engaged group of Members. The Task and Finish Group heard from a broad range of witnesses, listened to public opinion and developed clear recommendations which continue to be tracked.

Partnership Working Case Study

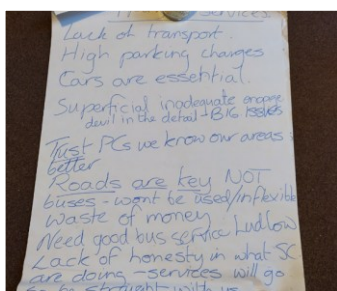
Purpose: The Partnership Working Task and Finish Group was established in September 2025 to identify opportunities to strengthen partnership working across the county. The Group aimed to explore how improved outcomes for people and communities in Shropshire could be achieved through more efficient and effective collaboration, including local-level initiatives.

Context: The Transformation and Improvement Committee recognised that every community has different needs and that approaches which work in a rural parish may not suit a large market town. Cabinet asked the Group to examine opportunities around the devolution of street scene services to non-pilot areas and feedback ideas and issues to inform the proposed wider rollout in 2027.

How: The Group reviewed approaches including clustering arrangements, hub-and-spoke networks, collaborative parish groups, blended delivery models and community work teams. Members met with town and parish council clerks and chairs across the county and tested the feasibility, risks and opportunities of different models through three workshops held in Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Oswestry.

Outcome: The Group heard from around 30 town and parish councils. Clear cross-cutting themes emerged across the workshop sessions and these formed the basis of the Group's recommendations.

Factors contributing to success: The Group engaged directly with town and parish councils across Shropshire, listened to local views and held open, honest conversations in communities' local areas. Regular reporting to Cabinet helped keep decision makers informed as the work progressed and supported the development of clear benefits for local communities.



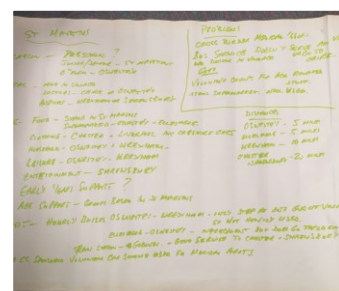
Plenary

Ludlow



Session 1

Bridgnorth



Session 2

Oswestry

Health in All Policies (HiAP) and Planning Task and Finish Group

Purpose: To examine how planning policy and decisions influence health and wellbeing in Shropshire and identify opportunities to embed Health in All Policies principles more effectively, particularly in relation to prevention, reducing inequalities and supporting independent living.

How: Members gathered evidence from Planning, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, developers, housing providers, residents and carers. The Group reviewed national and local policy, considered lived experience evidence, benchmarked with other authorities and undertook a visit to Telford and Wrekin Council to examine examples of health-focused planning and place shaping.

Outcome: The Group concluded that planning should be recognised as an upstream public health intervention and recommended stronger cross-service working, clearer policy support for accessible housing, greater recognition of rural social sustainability and improved monitoring of the health impacts of planning decisions.

Factors contributing to success: A detailed, evidence-led review involving a broad range of witnesses, lived experience, cross-sector perspectives and practical comparator learning helped the Group develop balanced and deliverable recommendations for healthier communities.



○ Station Quarter Site Visit ○○ Communal Space ○○○ Adaptable shower ○○○ Bedroom ○○○ Kitchen

Monitoring progress and impact of recommendations made

Following up recommendations is essential to effective Overview and Scrutiny. It allows committees to understand how their recommendations that have been accepted have been implemented and the impact that has been realised. To support this work an action plan template was developed to help officers track progress, which has been used regularly throughout the year.

During 2025/26, Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes included follow-up items to review progress against previous recommendations, including:

- Developer Contributions Task and Finish Group – update against previous actions.
- Staff Bullying and Harassment Task and Finish Group – six month follow-up of actions against Task and Finish recommendations – *“The committee expressed encouragement about the work done and the direction of policy and evidence tracking.” – minutes of the 1.12.2025 T&I Overview and Scrutiny Committee* [Agenda Template](#)

This approach has worked well and is continuing in the 2026/27 work programmes, with action plans from 2025/26 Task and Finish Groups already followed up or scheduled for review. Since May 2026, follow-up has taken place on recommendations from the Station Gyratory and Highways Contract Review Task and Finish Groups.

This enables Overview and Scrutiny to demonstrate that they are focused not only on making recommendations, but also on understanding whether their work has led to meaningful change.



What is being worked on in 2026/27 onward

The year to May 2026 was a year of resetting and reestablishing the role of Overview and Scrutiny more firmly within the Council, starting with the member induction sessions and training and support for overview and scrutiny members. After a full year of scrutiny in action 2026/27 will be a year that builds on what has gone well, embeds strong links to the new Corporate Plan, Improvement Plan and Financial Sustainability and recover Strategy, and ensures the continuous improvement of the function.

The overarching direction and focused theme for overview and scrutiny work will progress from financial survival to financial sustainability, reflecting the strategies of the council. This repositions Overview and Scrutiny from reacting to financial pressures towards helping shape sustainable solutions.

May 2026 saw changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure to better reflect the priorities and focus of the council. The Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny has been replaced with Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny, and a new Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been established. The remits for all current Committees are available on the Enabling Effective Overview and Scrutiny webpages via this link - [Overview and Scrutiny Committee Remits.pptx](#)

The chairs and vice chairs of Committees have continued to reflect a strong cross-party mix, with non-administration party chairs and vice chairs in place for the coming year.

In order to strengthen the strategic focus of the overview and scrutiny work programme, a joint session was held on 9 June 2026. This was attended by members of all of the overview and scrutiny committees with senior officers and portfolio holders. The session provided direction for future work programme priorities, reflecting the work planned for the coming year and key decisions in the Cabinet Forward Plan. This session has been followed up by each committee where they have further refined and defined their topics.

Further pre-decision scrutiny is planned for the coming year to enable members not on Cabinet to contribute to their knowledge and experience to inform decision making. Committees will also continue to hold decision makers to account and carry out investigations and reviews to inform policy development and review, improve public services, and amplify the voice of Shropshire communities. This will include identifying and pursuing opportunities to bring forward the voices of young people and those who use and experience services.

The ongoing connections with Local Government Association (LGA) and Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) networks will continue to provide additional support for Members and officers around benchmarking, best practice, and training opportunities.



Overview and Scrutiny work programme 2026/27

Following our joint strategic work-programming session, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has identified key areas of focus for 2026/27.

i These are examples of the work planned by each committee over the next municipal year.



Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Neighbourhood health



Children and young people's mental health



Health in all policies



Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Urgent and emergency care performance



Winter plan



Hospital Transformation plan



People Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Adult social care transformation plan



Children's services transformation plan



Child friendly Shropshire



Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Riverside Gardens development



Station gyratory



Waste minimisation



Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Financial monitoring



Performance monitoring



Partnership working



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Housing strategy



Local plan



STAR Housing review



Our focus

These work programme priorities will help ensure that our scrutiny activity is aligned to the Council's priorities, supports financial sustainability, and helps to improve outcomes for the people and communities of Shropshire.

All Member Riverside Gardens Site Visit - July 2026 coordinated by the economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee alongside an all-Member briefing.

