Committee and Date
Cabinet
2 December 2026

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2026
In the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.30 am

Responsible Officer: Ashley Kendrick
Email: ashley.kendrick@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 250893

Present
Councillors Heather Kidd, Alex Wagner, Roger Evans, Andy Hall, Ruth Houghton, James Owen, David Vasmer, David Walker, Sarah Marston and Robert Jones (Substitute) (substitute for Rob Wilson)

In attendance
Group Leaders – Councillor Rosemary Dartnall (Labour), Councillor Dawn Husemann (Reform UK), Councillor Julian Dean (Green & Progressive Independents – deputising for Councillor Duncan Kerr).

Members – Councillors Ed Potter, Jamie Daniels, Adam Feifer

Officers – Tanya Miles (Chief Executive), Rachel Robinson (Corporate Director – Population, Wellbeing & Neighbourhoods), Duncan Whitfield (Corporate Director – Finance & Governance, S151), Jo Brown (Corporate Director – Change & Improvement) Richard Phillips (Director – Legal & Governance, Monitoring Officer), Andy Wilde (Service Director – Highways & Transport), Paula Mawson (Service Director – Communities & Customer), Paul Clarke (Service Director – Strategy & Change), Pete Banford (Culture & Communities Manager), Ashley Kendrick (Democratic Services Officer)

269 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Rob Wilson (deputised by Councillor Robert Jones) and Councillor Dan Thomas, Group Leader – Conservatives.

270 Disclosable Interests

In relation to agenda item 15 – Shaping the future of Shropshire Libraries – Consultation, Councillor Roger Evans declared an interest as a Pontesbury Parish Councillor, with the library being a tenant of the Parish Council. He confirmed that he would withdraw from the meeting for this item.

In relation to agenda item 15 – Shaping the future of Shropshire Libraries – Consultation, Councillor Ruth Houghton declared an interest as a director of Rural Lifeline CIC, which provides a library service in Bishop's Castle.

In relation to agenda item 15 – Shaping the future of Shropshire Libraries – Consultation, Councillor Heather Kidd declared an interest as a Shropshire Council representative on the Rural Lifeline CIC board.

In relation to agenda Item 17 – Shirehall Marketing Proposals, Councillor Alex Wagner declared an interest as he had recently moved to a property close to the site.

271 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2026 be confirmed as an accurate record.

272 **Public Question Time**

Five questions had been received:

John Palmer, in relation to emergency preparedness.

David Kilby, on behalf of Shropshire Playing Fields Association, in relation to the Shirehall site.

Jonathan Owen, on behalf of in relation to Shirehall. In relation to a supplementary question regarding publication of the evaluation criteria for selecting a preferred purchaser, it was confirmed that bidders would be informed of the assessment criteria and these would be included in marketing documentation where appropriate, although commercially sensitive information could remain confidential.

Jane Gallagher, in relation to Shirehall. In relation to a supplementary question regarding the role of design proposals in selecting a preferred purchaser, it was confirmed that design and planning would be considered, alongside the financial offer, deliverability, certainty, risk and wider public value.

John Crowe, in relation to Shirehall. In relation to a supplementary question regarding whether savings from rationalising other Council properties would form part of the Shirehall evaluation, it was confirmed that the Shirehall disposal would be assessed on its own merits, with any wider rationalisation of Council property considered separately through the asset strategy and appropriate governance processes.

The full questions and responses can be found on Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 18th November, 2026, 10.30 am — Shropshire Council

273 **Member Question Time**

Five questions were received:

Councillor Teri Trickett, in relation to disabled parking provision.

Councillor Adam Fejfer, in relation to evening bus services and local connectivity.

Councillor Jamie Daniels, in relation to complaints handling. In response to a supplementary question concerning complaints exceeding statutory timescales, it was acknowledged that improvements could continue to be made and outstanding cases would be progressed as quickly as possible.

Councillor Brendan Mallon, in relation to the future of the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum at Shrewsbury Castle. In response to a supplementary question, it was anticipated that this work would progress in the new year.

Councillor Donna Edmunds, in relation to lessons arising from the closure of Cornovii.

The full questions and responses can be found on Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 18th November, 2026, 10.30 am — Shropshire Council

274 **Scrutiny Items**

There were no scrutiny items.

275 **Crisis & Resilience Fund – 6-month Progress Update**

Cabinet considered the six-month progress of the Crisis and Resilience Fund, noting that more than 11,600 payments had been made and £1.74 million invested. Members welcomed the focus on early intervention and prevention, including support for households in work as well as those receiving benefits, and recognised the important contribution of the voluntary and community sector.

Members discussed how the effectiveness of the Fund would be measured, particularly whether interventions reduced repeat crises. It was confirmed that national reporting and evaluation arrangements were in place and that further evaluation was being explored. Cabinet welcomed the possibility of scrutiny considering the Fund and its outcomes.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Endorsed the summary of the wider economic environment and the Council's borrowings and investments set out in Appendix A.

2. Reviewed and endorsed the performance within the prudential indicators for quarter 2, 2026/27 (Appendix B).

276 **Council Tax Support - Proposed Changes 2027-28 Consultation Responses**

Cabinet considered proposed changes to the Council Tax Support scheme, welcoming the proposal to disregard Child Benefit as income when calculating entitlement. Members noted that this would provide additional support to low-income households, including working families, and help address child poverty.

It was also noted that residents affected by the 20% minimum payment would continue to receive additional support through the Crisis and Resilience Fund, with eligible support increasing to £90 in 2027/28 and £100 the following year.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Considered the responses received to the statutory consultation.

2. Agreed the following changes to the Council Tax Support scheme with effect from 2027-28 subject to formal approval by full Council on 10 December 2026.

    - Retain the current tapered scheme with the following adjustments
    - Disregard Child Benefit as an income at an estimated cost of £800k per year
    - Retain current minimum payment and maintain current protections for vulnerable groups
    - Continue to support those impacted by 20% minimum payment with a top up from the Crisis Resilience Fund as follows
        - 2026-27 (current year) up to £80
        - 2027-28 – up to £90
        - 2028-29 – up to £100

277 **Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2026/27**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the Quarter 2 financial position, noting a forecast £0.051 million surplus and improvements in financial management, forecasting and the Council's reserves position.

Members welcomed the progress made but highlighted continuing pressures within Children's Services and home-to-school transport. Members discussed measures to reduce the cost of placements while maintaining positive outcomes for children, increasing foster care capacity, and exploring more cost-effective transport arrangements, including greater use of shared transport where appropriate and safe.

It was noted that a members' briefing would provide further information on home-to-school transport and the work underway to address the pressures. Cabinet also noted the importance of rebuilding reserves to strengthen the Council's financial resilience.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

A. Supported the Q2 favourable revenue outturn forecast of £0.051m.

B. Supported the significant adverse variation forecast for Children's Services and the mitigations in place to contain and reduce this over the remainder of the financial year.

C. Instructed the Chief Executive and s151 Officer to continue to take all necessary steps to ensure that directorates remain within their budgets and appropriate mitigating action are taken where adverse variations are arising.

D. Supported the forecast level of savings achieved of £4.052m to date and £5.368m to be delivered by the end of the financial year.

E. Supported the forecast General Fund Balance as at 31 March 2027 of £15.051m and the strategy to continue to restore this balance over time.

F. Noted work in progress through the officer led Budget, Transformation and Change Panel (BTCP) and Workforce Review Board to give provisional approval to projects designed to transform the Council, achieve further savings and to rebuild capacity and capability, subject to further oversight by Cabinet and the Finance and Improvement Scrutiny Committee.

G. Approved the provisional allocations of transformation funds to date of £3.532m for 2026/27.

H. Supported the Capital programme and forecast outturn position at quarter 2.

I. Approved the adjustments necessary to the Capital Programme.

J. Approved the Revenue and Capital budget virements as set out in Appendix B and D.

K. Agreed that a provisional Q3 report will be submitted to Cabinet in January 2027, based on period 8 actuals as adjusted for more current information.

278 **Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2026/27**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the Quarter 2 Treasury Management Update, which provided an overview of the current economic environment and the Council's treasury management activity, including actions taken in accordance with previous Council decisions.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Endorsed the summary of the wider economic environment and the Council's borrowings and investments set out in Appendix A.

2. Reviewed and endorsed the performance within the prudential indicators for quarter 2, 2026/27 (Appendix B).

279 **Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2027 - 2032**

Cabinet considered the updated Medium Term Financial Plan, noting the continuing financial challenge and an anticipated requirement for approximately £108 million of Exceptional Financial Support for 2027/28. Work would continue to reduce this requirement through further savings, income generation, transformation and review of proposed service growth.

Members discussed the wider pressures facing local government and the importance of rebuilding organisational capacity. Cabinet supported moving away from the previous commissioning council approach in favour of a pragmatic mixed model of in-house and externally provided services, with appropriate expertise and contract management retained within the Council.

Members also discussed the proposed suspension and review of the Climate Strategy, with the revised approach expected to focus on resilience, adaptation and measures providing demonstrable benefits for residents. It was confirmed that the updated strategy was expected in the new year and there was an intention for it to undergo pre-decision scrutiny.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approved, supported and noted:

A. The continued uncertainty surrounding local government finance in spite of last year's medium term settlement and that the Council has been a net loser from the fair funding review with further risks of losses in funding through business rate retention and grants and unclear conditions relating to the rollout of an overnight levy.

B. That the quarter two monitoring report for 2026/27 is currently forecasting a balanced position for the year at outturn and is subject to a separate report on this Cabinet agenda.

C. That the current estimated EFS requirement for 2026/27 stands at around £87m subject to a balanced budget position at year end, significantly less than the £121m originally projected.

D. The updated budget assumptions for 2027/28 and 2028/29 as set out in Section 4 and the latest forecast position to 2030/31.

E. That a further update of the MTFP with final budget and council tax proposals for 2027/28 will be presented to Cabinet in February 2027.

F. Provisional growth and savings set out in Appendix B and C that will be subject to further due diligence before formal approval by Cabinet in February.

G. The current estimated budget shortfall for 2027/28 of £108.424m, which is subject to further economic assumptions and budget adjustments throughout November

and December and the provisional funding settlement that will be announced in December.

H. That Cabinet will not be continuing with the previous policy of being a 'Commissioning Council' adopted in 2018 and due process will be followed in reaching decisions in the best interests of residents and whatever provides the best outcomes.

I. That officers be instructed to suspend the current Climate Strategy and present an updated Strategy to Cabinet approval as soon as possible, noting that this strategy must be affordable by the Council.

J. That the Chief Executive and S151 Officer will enter into provisional discussions with MHCLG regarding a further request for EFS for 2027/28 on the basis of current assumptions as set out in this report and work continuing through to February, and these discussions will include a request for the Council again to be allowed to raise Council Tax at a level above the current cap of 4.99%.

K. The impact of the ongoing pressures on Shropshire Council's financial position being created by both demand and price pressures, exacerbated by recent funding settlements that have fallen below the real terms increase being experienced.

280 **Draft Capital Strategy 2027 – 2032**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the Draft Capital Strategy, noting the move to a 10-year planning horizon to provide greater visibility of the Council's future capital requirements, while recognising that projects remained subject to affordability.

Members discussed the need for capital investment to deliver clear benefits and savings, including potential investment supporting looked-after children. Particular emphasis was placed on improving the allocation and use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, with revised governance and allocation arrangements expected to return to Cabinet.

Members noted that a further update to the Capital Strategy would be considered in January, ahead of approval by Council in February.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

A. Supported the extension of the programme to give a ten year horizon of funded projects and unfunded projects that will remain subject to affordability.

B. Supported the current Capital Programme as set out in Appendix A;

C. Supported the proposed sources of financing set out in Appendix B, with delegated authority given to the s151 Officer to ultimately determine the most appropriate source of financing for each scheme for subsequent approval by Cabinet.

D. Approved subject to agreement from Council in February 2027 the addition of proposed new projects to the Capital Programme in Appendix C.

E. Supported the continued pausing and deferral of prior year schemes as set out in Paragraph 4.4 subject to further due diligence.

F. Supported the continued flexible use of capital receipts for 2027/28, as set out in paragraph,4.6 in accordance with statutory guidance in place until 2030, with use subject to agreement by the s151 Officer and reported through in-year monitoring reports to Cabinet and Council, as appropriate.

G. Instructed the Chief Executive and s151 Officer in consultation with other officers to update of the Council's CIL policy and related procedures in order to expedite the allocation of CIL and s106 funds to appropriate capital projects for approval by Cabinet.

H. Supported that a further update to the Capital Strategy including any revisions to funding and new schemes will be submitted to Cabinet in January 2027 for approval in advance of agreement to the Strategy by Council in February 2027.

281 **Q2 Performance Report**

The Leader introduced the report and advised that overall delivery against the Corporate Plan remained broadly on track. Of the 48 commitments, nine had been completed, while 23 performance indicators were rated green, one amber and 16 red.

Members welcomed improvements in local bus services and rural connectivity, including increased passenger journeys and service mileage. It was clarified that the HRA Business Plan remained under development and had not yet been fully completed.

Concern was raised regarding the decline in adults undertaking active travel, and it was agreed that this would be investigated and a response provided following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- Reviewed performance at Quarter 2 and confirmed any areas in the report that need action to address them.

- Provided further feedback on the performance report that can be taken forward in further refinements to the report format.

- Proposed emerging topics or issues as appropriate to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider for inclusion in their work programme.

282 Review of Highways Maintenance Strategy and Highways Inspection Policy

The Portfolio Holder for Highways introduced the report, which set out revised arrangements for highway maintenance and inspections, with priorities including pothole repairs, increased preventative maintenance, active travel and improved management of the highway network.

Members welcomed the work of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Its recommendations covered performance monitoring, member and community engagement, active travel, communication with residents and a greater emphasis on long-term asset management.

Members discussed whether sufficient capacity was available to deliver the strategy, including maintenance of road markings, and sought assurance regarding the quality of highway repairs. It was confirmed that contractor work was recorded and inspected, with contractors required to rectify work that did not meet the required standard at their own cost. Further work was underway to strengthen the Council's capacity and improve communication with town and parish councils.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet

- Approved the proposed Highway Safety Inspection Manual and Car Park Addendum at Appendices C and D;
- Approved the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy at Appendices A and B; and
- Noted the recommendations of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Appendix E and endorsed the officer responses and proposed actions set out in this report
- Noted the comments in section 12 of this report and content of the Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment at Appendix F.

283 Shaping the future of Shropshire Libraries - Consultation

After declaring an interest, Councillor Roger Evans left the meeting for the duration of this item.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities & Environment introduced the report, which sought approval to undertake a 12-week public consultation on proposals for the future delivery of the library service. It was emphasised that no final decisions were being taken on library closures, the mobile library service or changes to opening hours at this stage.

Concerns were raised regarding the potential impact of the proposals on deprived and rural communities, particularly users of the Lantern and Gobowen libraries and the mobile

library service. The importance of libraries as community spaces providing access to wider services, tackling isolation and supporting children and young people was highlighted.

Assurance was given that the consultation would include targeted engagement with affected communities, mobile library users, children and young people, and those who may have difficulty responding digitally. Alternative delivery arrangements and mitigation measures would also be explored, including community hubs, outreach provision, transport and partnership working with town and parish councils.

It was confirmed that consultation responses and an updated equality impact assessment would inform the final proposals, with pre-decision scrutiny before the matter returned to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Noted the updated needs assessment for the Shropshire Libraries Service (October 2026) at Appendix A, which presents demographic information for Shropshire, the profile of Shropshire Library users, the service demand and usage analysis, library costs and individual library profiles.

2. Approved a public consultation for 12 weeks on the future of Shropshire libraries based on the proposed changes outlined in the report.

3. Endorsed the approach presented in the report to undertake a targeted review of physical assets and locations of libraries.

4. Endorsed the approach to continue to explore mitigations and alternative delivery options with Town & Parish Councils, voluntary sector and community groups to support the delivery of Libraries.

5. Instructed Council Officers to prepare a pre-decision report to the Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the public consultation for libraries, for consideration of any recommendations or feedback to Cabinet based on the consultation responses.

284 **Asset Strategy & Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which updated Cabinet on the Asset Strategy, Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme and asset disposal programme.

Cabinet noted the strengthened governance arrangements and the development of a new five-year Asset Strategy aimed at securing capital receipts, reducing ongoing costs, generating income and ensuring the Council's assets supported service transformation.

Members discussed the proposed £3 million transformation investment, including the balance between external specialist support and retaining appropriate skills and expertise in-house. It was confirmed that future proposals would identify the resources required and

that the Corporate Landlord review would consider appropriate options for insourcing, outsourcing and developing internal capacity.

The importance of ensuring assets delivered value for money, operational resilience and wider strategic benefits was also highlighted.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Supported the £3 million approved by the Budget, Transformation and Change Panel for 2026/27 and 2027/28 to fund the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme, from the £15 million provision for transformation and change approved by Full Council on 26 February 2026.

2. Supported the new governance arrangements in place since June 2026, set out in Appendix A, including the Asset Transactions Group, chaired by the Section 151 Officer, which oversees two workstreams: (a) the Council's asset disposal programme; (b) the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme.

3. Supported the 2026/27 General Fund asset disposal pipeline of £5,900,120 as at 25 October 2026, comprising £2,637,700 received from completed sales, £1,409,000 from sales agreed but not yet completed, and an indicative £1,853,420 from disposals in preparation or on the market.

4. Supported that £3 million of transformation funding has been approved by the Budget, Transformation and Change Panel for the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme across 2026/27 and 2027/28, from the £15 million provision for transformation and change approved by Full Council on 26 February 2026.

5. Agreed that provision of up to £3 million for the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme be reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan across 2026/27 and 2027/28, with the final profiling of expenditure between financial years determined in accordance with programme requirements and the Council's financial planning arrangements.

6. Delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer and the Interim Service Director – Place Shaping, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to commission and incur expenditure required to deliver the initial phase of the programme within the approved funding envelope, including the award of commissions and additional staffing resource.

7. Agreed that, following completion of the initial phase, a further report is intended to be submitted to Cabinet in Quarter 1 of 2027/28, informed by relevant milestones and outputs from the Council's wider transformation programme, setting out:

   (a) progress with the Asset Strategy and Corporate Landlord Review Transformation Programme;

(b) the assessment of the Council's existing arrangements against the requirements of a Corporate Landlord model;

(c) expenditure incurred and the forecast funding requirement for the remainder of the programme;

(d) the early opportunities identified for capital receipts, revenue savings and additional income; and

(e) the proposed scope, delivery approach, anticipated benefits and funding requirement for the principal phase of the programme, together with any further approvals required from Cabinet

285 **Shirehall Marketing Proposals**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which provided an update on preparations for the marketing and disposal of Shirehall following Cabinet's decision in July. Members noted that decommissioning and due diligence were progressing and that the proposed prospectus allowed flexibility for residential, mixed-use, redevelopment, refurbishment or partial retention proposals.

Cabinet noted ongoing engagement with Homes England to explore whether specialist support could improve the viability and marketability of the site. This would proceed alongside preparations for disposal to avoid delaying the process, with a decision on the preferred route expected by the end of December 2026.

In response to a question regarding the condition and decommissioning of Shirehall, assurance was given that works were intended to reduce holding costs and keep the building safe and secure pending marketing, without affecting its structural integrity.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

A. Noted the progress made since the Cabinet decision of 14 July 2026 in preparing Shirehall for disposal.

B. Noted the requirements arising from the Best Value Notice and CIPFA External Assurance Review, including the recommendation for a clear and short deadline for feasibility work relating to Shirehall and for the Council to seek to sell the asset as soon as possible.

C. Agreed that officers continue discussions with Homes England and relevant Government partners during November and December 2026 to establish whether available support could materially improve the feasibility, marketability and delivery of Shirehall.

D. Agreed that this engagement is progressed alongside completion of the work required to prepare Shirehall for disposal, including outstanding due diligence, decommissioning requirements and preparation for marketing.

286 **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:

287 **Shirehall Marketing Proposals (Exempt Appendices)**

Members considered the exempt appendices. All decisions had been taken in open session.

288 **Chief Executive and Chief Officer Pay Award**

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet considered the options presented in section 4.2 and recommended to Full Council the preferred option for the 2026/27 pay award for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers.

289 **Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on 2 December 2026.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....