

**Committee and Date**

Cabinet

22 January 2025

**CABINET****Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2024**

**In the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND  
10.30 am**

**Responsible Officer:** Ashley Kendrick

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**Present**

Councillor Lezley Picton (Chairman)

Councillors Ian Nellins, Robert Macey, Gwilym Butler, Kirstie Hurst-Knight, Mark Jones, Dan Morris and Chris Schofield

**231 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Dean Carroll and Cecilia Motley.

**232 Disclosable Interests**

Councillors Rosemary Dartnall and Julian Dean declared an interest in the item on grounds maintenance service delegation to Shrewsbury Town Council as they were both members of the Town Council.

**233 Minutes****RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

**234 Public Question Time**

Public questions were received from:

Gareth Jones, in relation to the Experimental Traffic Order (ETRO) at Mereside Primary School.

Mike Streetly, in relation to the full business cases for North West Relief Road and Oxon Relief Road.

Jamie Russell, in relation to Community Infrastructure Levy and the North West Relief Road.

Emma Bullard, in relation to the North West Relief Road.

The full questions and response provided can be found on [Responses to Public Questions - Cabinet 4 December 2024.pdf](#)

### **235 Member Question Time**

Members questions were received from:

Councillor Alex Wagner, read by Councillor David Vasmer, in relation to access to medical service for the homeless. By way of supplementary question, Councillor Vasmer queried whether the new arrangements would be reviewed. The Leader confirmed that she would ask the Portfolio Holder to follow this up.

Councillor Julian Dean, in relation to offsetting emissions. In response to a supplementary question seeking assurances that plans to offset emissions were meaningful, the Portfolio Holder provided a list of mitigation measures that are already in place.

Councillor Rosemary Dartnall, in relation to the North West Relief Road. By way of supplementary question, Councillor Dartnall expressed concern that the emissions had not been calculated correctly and requested that correct figures be included in a consultation as this may affect the results as to whether people want the road to be constructed. The Portfolio Holder advised that the DfT had changed the standards for carbon and the only requirement was for the Planning Committee to be notified.

Councillor Bernie Bentick, in relation to tree felling in Meole. In response to a supplementary question regarding “street trees”, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that a response would be made in writing.

The full questions and responses provided can be found on [Responses to Member Questions - Cabinet 4 December 2024.pdf](#)

### **236 Scrutiny Items**

Councillor Claire Wild, Chair of the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the recommendations from the committee following discussions at their meeting on the collaborative budget report.

Members were advised that the committee felt that this collaborative process was far superior to the previous alternative budget process and should be continued as a collaborative way of working in the future. Members of the task and finish group commented on the usefulness and positivity of the process, and it was noted that the report was unanimously accepted. It was however acknowledged that further information had been requested regarding third party contracts.

Gratitude was expressed to all the officers involved.

### **237 Grounds Maintenance Service Delegation to Shrewsbury Town Council**

*It was agreed that items 15 and 16 would be brought forward to this part of the meeting.*

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities introduced the report which proposed that a range of grounds maintenance services currently undertaken on behalf of Shropshire Council by Shrewsbury Town Council under a Service Level Agreement are formally delegated to them for future delivery from April 2025. He drew members' attention to an alteration to the recommendation contained within the report: delegation of the detailed agreement to the Chief Executive, not the Executive Director of Place

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Alan Mosley, Leader of Shrewsbury Town Council, read a statement on behalf of the Town Council expressing their disappointment that the maintenance of the golf course had been removed from the SLA and requested that this be reconsidered.

The Portfolio Holder emphasised that the decision to remove the golf course from the agreement was based on the need to improve the quality of the golf course as the current maintenance arrangement was not meeting the required standards. It was suggested that the decision could be reviewed in the future once the golf course's quality has improved.

The Leader addressed concerns that the golf course could be closed or sold for redevelopment and reiterated that the recommendations were to improve the facility.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet approved:

- The delegation of grounds maintenance services currently undertaken by Shrewsbury Town Council under a Service Level Agreement directly to Shrewsbury Town Council, along with the appropriate associated budget, subject to a parallel agreement by Shrewsbury Town Council to accept this delegation.
- The delegation of the detailed agreement between Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities.
- That a Monitoring Board is established to meet a minimum of once a year to monitor the operation of the delegated services with joint membership from Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council.

#### **238 Leisure Services Review Consultation**

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Digital presented the report which outlined options for changes to provision at Much Wenlock Leisure Centre and sought approval to initiate public consultation on the proposals. He emphasised the importance of the facility and the need to find a sustainable solution for its continued operation.

Members noted the challenges faced by Much Wenlock Leisure Centre, including limited public access during school hours and financial sustainability.

Members supported the consultation to gather community input and explore potential solutions. It was noted that the school were involved in discussions and were keen to maintain community use.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

- Authorised an 8-week public consultation on options for the future of the Much Wenlock Leisure Centre, including the proposal to serve notice to 3-18 Education Trust to cease to operate Much Wenlock Leisure Centre on behalf of William Brookes School and withdraw the associated subsidy for community use.
- Agreed that once the public consultation is completed, the results are reported back to Cabinet for a decision on the preferred option.

**239 Setting the Council Tax Taxbase for 2025/26**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities presented the report which outlined the Council Tax discount policies, Council Tax Support Scheme and the Collection Rate and the impact of these on the taxbase. For 2025/26 the Council Tax taxbase would be 121,374.04 Band D equivalents, which was an increase of 1.83% from 2024/25.

In response to a query regarding the impact of new housing developments, it was confirmed that the Council calculates the expected income based on the number of new houses being built, which helps in forecasting the overall income.

The Executive Director for Resources confirmed that a more comprehensive explanation of the criteria and discounts would be provided outside the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet agreed and recommended to full Council:

- 3.1. To approve, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Shropshire Council as it's Council Tax taxbase for the year 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix A, totalling 121,374.04 Band D equivalents
- 3.2. To note the changes to the Council's localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2025/26. The scheme is attached at Appendix B
- 3.3. To note the Council Tax Support Scheme amendments detailed in Appendix B have no impact on the taxbase determination.
- 3.4. To note the exclusion of 8,146.06 Band D equivalents from the taxbase calculation as a result of localised Council Tax Support.

- 3.5. To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to not award a discount in respect of vacant dwellings undergoing major repair, i.e. former Class A exempt properties.
- 3.6. To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties, of 100% for one month i.e. effectively reinstating the exemption and the resulting exclusion of 232.45 band D equivalents from the taxbase calculation.
- 3.7. To note continuation of the “six week rule” in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties
- 3.8. To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 100% in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than one year (but less than five years) and the resulting inclusion of an additional 752.78 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
- 3.9. To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 200% in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than five years (but less than ten years) and the resulting inclusion of an additional 204.00 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
- 3.10. To note continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 300% in relation to dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than ten years and the resulting inclusion of an additional 196.67 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
- 3.11. To note the implementation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 100% in relation to second homes (other than those that retain a 50% discount through regulation as a result of job related protection) and the resulting inclusion of an additional 1,833.88 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
- 3.12. To approve a collection rate for the year 2025/26 of 98.2%.

## 240 Collaborative Budget

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities introduced the report of the cross-party Collaborative Budget task and finish group which set out the work carried out and broad themes identified as contributions to the 2025/26 budget setting process. This approach had helped to make best use of officer time, whilst they work to meet the financial challenges of the current year, as well as providing a forum for open and transparent discussions, where members from all parties had access to the same information and answers to the questions asked and points raised.

Concern was raised regarding the time it had taken to reach the stage of discussing options at the task and finish group meetings. The Portfolio Holder acknowledged that the process took longer than expected due to the need to ensure all members understood the

budget planning process. He emphasised the importance of this understanding, especially for new members post-election. Further, he assured members that all relevant information would be shared and that the collaborative approach would continue to evolve.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

- 3.4. Accepted the themes identified by the cross-party task and finish group and take them into account in the development of the council budget for 2025/26.
- 3.5. Accepted the feedback from the Transformation & Improvement Scrutiny on learning from the collaborative budget process and how it compared to the previous alternative budget arrangements.
- 3.6. Considered and confirmed that the Collaborative Budget approach should be adopted by Council in future years.

**241 Draft Financial Strategy 2024/25 - 2028/29**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities presented the report, highlighting the challenges in predicting future financial settlements, including the potential for a 12-month settlement followed by a three-year settlement.

Members noted that the council was awaiting settlement figures, expected around December 16th, which will be incorporated into the financial strategy. Public consultation on savings areas was ongoing, and the updated financial strategy would be brought back to Cabinet in January.

It was confirmed that the period 7 figures would be circulated to members before Christmas.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

1. Cabinet endorsed the work undertaken through the collaborative budget process and considers the proposed amendments and assumptions made since receiving the October MTFS update.
2. Cabinet agreed the themed savings areas for public consultation further to cross-party discussion on the details to be taken forward as part of the budget consultation process.
3. An updated MTFS (following receipt of the provisional local government financial settlement) is provided to Cabinet in January 2025, incorporating the results of the LGFS.

**242 Treasury Management Update Quarter 2 2024/25**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities presented the report which outlined the treasury management activities of the Council in the second quarter of 2024/25.

In response to a query regarding a cash shortage at the end of June and how it is being managed to avoid recurrence, the Portfolio Holder explained that historically, the council had been cash-rich, but now it was moving towards a position common among other councils.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet reviewed the position as set out in the report:

1. Noting the summary of the wider economic environment and the Council's borrowings and investments set out in Appendix A.
2. Noting the performance within prudential indicators for quarter 2, 2024/25 (Appendix B)

**243 Treasury Strategy 2024/25 Mid-Year Review**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Corporate Resources and Communities presented the report which confirmed compliance with Treasury and Prudential limits agreed by Full Council.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Agreed the Treasury Strategy activity as set out in the report.
2. Recommended to Council the revision to the Prudential Indicators as set out in section 9 of the report.
3. Noted that the changes to prudential indicators reflect the reduction of internal cash balances and the need to externalise debt; this is a straightforward liquidity requirement unrelated to other financial matters and would have been required at this time regardless of the wider financial position.
4. Noted that provision for additional borrowing costs in revenue budgets was included in the 2024/25 budget.

**244 Air Quality consultation ESHIA**

It was confirmed that the title of the agenda item was incorrect and did not refer to the consultation but sought approval of the Air Quality Actions Plans for Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth as per the report.

Members welcomed the report but noted that there was no reference to the Shrewsbury Movement Strategy and stated the importance of active travel schemes in reducing

pollution. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Education advised that ten more schools signed up for personalised active travel plans, and expressed the importance of community and school involvement.

In response to a query regarding funding, the Executive Director of Health, Wellbeing and Protection responded that the proposals build on existing funding and there are efforts to bring in additional funding through local partners.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet agreed to:

- a) Adopt the Shrewsbury Air Quality Action Plan and that the measures detailed within the plan be implemented where possible.
- b) Adopt the Bridgnorth Air Quality Action Plan and that the measures detailed within the plan be implemented where possible.
- c) Delegate responsibility for monitoring and reporting on air quality levels and the ongoing implementation of the plan to the Executive Director of Health Wellbeing and Prevention, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services.
- d) Delegate responsibility for the implementation of measures detailed within each action plan to the Assistant Director of Infrastructure and Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways to include, but not limited to, finalising the delivery of the action plan, securing funding, and consulting stakeholders on details of proposed measures.

**245 Shropshire Infrastructure Funding Statement 2024**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services introduced the report which sought approval for the 2024 Infrastructure Funding Statement, which is a statutory requirement for Councils to produce.

Members noted that the Infrastructure Funding Statement provided a detailed breakdown of the amount of Section 106 and CIL contributions the Council had received in the reporting year (2023-2024), as well as where these funds have been used or allocated to.

Concern was expressed that there were no figures associated with the North West Relief Road. Members were reminded that this had been raised earlier in response to a public question where the Portfolio Holder had confirmed that further detail will be included in the full business case which will go to Council in the new year.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Agreed the Infrastructure Funding Statement included as Appendix 1 to this report for publication before the end of 2024.



2. Delegated responsibility to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services, to agree, if necessary, amendments to the Infrastructure Funding Statement before its publication.

## 246 Parking Tariff Consultation

The Portfolio Holder for Highways presented the report following a public consultation on the recommendations within the final Cabinet report regarding parking tariffs.

Members highlighted changes to evening parking fees to assist the night-time economy for workers and those attending Shrewsbury's many evening venues. There were concerns about the clarity and availability of the proposed charges, and a request from the opposition was received that the report returns to the cabinet in January with full and current information. Members were advised that the only change to the figures provided previously was to remove the evening charge of £1.00 from the car parks at Abbey Foregate and St Julians Friars as discussed at 7.33.3 and 7.33.4.

A request was received for clarification on parking charges at Abbey Foregate and Shirehall overspill car park and it was confirmed that these would be provided outside the meeting.

### RESOLVED:

1. To conclude that the order should be made as drafted in relation to Recommendation 1-8 and 10-15 having considered the objections as set out in Table A below and based on the discussions of each item in the Background sections below. The recommendation number relates the Objection Types consideration addressed in the sections between 7.23 and 7.39.
2. To conclude that the order should be modified before making in relation to Recommendation 9, the evening charges, as per the discussion in 7.26 (h) to (l) and 7.33

Table A

Recommendation Number	Objection	Make the Order	Consideration
1	That the increase is too large or in excess of inflation	Yes	The increases are those necessary to effect a change in motorist behaviour in terms of parking location or travel mode
2	The increase is motivated by the need to generate revenue	Yes	Refer to Recommendation 1. In addition this would not be accordance with the legal reasons for setting charges.
3/4/5 - Shrewsbury	Deters Visitors, Shoppers and	Yes	The transfer of long-term motorists to more appropriate

	Workers - Shrewsbury		locations creates capacity for new/extra motorists who can visit or shop
3/4/5 - Shropshire	Deters Visitors, Shoppers and Workers - Shrewsbury	Yes	The transfer of long-term motorists to more appropriate locations creates capacity for new/extra motorists who can visit or shop
6	Difficulty retaining or recruiting Employees when parking charges are such a deterrent	Yes	Commuters are the most likely to utilise space needed for visitors yet they are also the most able to establish alternative travel routes.
7	Harm to the Economy	Yes	Refer to Recommendation 3/4/5
8	Harm to the 'Sunday' economy	Yes	Sunday parking is as available as most daytime parking and this will encourage active travel.
9	Harm to the 'Evening' economy	Modify	Re-introduce a graduation in charges and free parking for evening employees (and visitors) in two locations
10	Displacement of local parking to adjacent uncontrolled Residential Areas	Yes	Effects are not considered widespread. Mitigation can be taken relatively quickly.
11	Transfer of business to other towns – particularly Telford	Yes	Competition from Telford relates more to the type of town and its businesses than the parking charges
12	Unfair to residents in that they are a captive market in a single supplier situation	Yes	Residents receive a very healthy discount of up to 80% of 'normal' charges.
13	Unfair to rural dwellers	Yes	The assertion is disputed with no difference between rural and urban motorists
14	Unfair to disabled, elderly and those with other medical conditions.	Yes	Blue Badge holders already have significant concessions but to extend this to others who fall between the blue badge holder and the healthy motorist would be extremely onerous
15	Lack of Alternative Transport,	Yes	The Park and Ride (and bus) service may not meet

	particularly Public Transport		everyone's needs but it is suitable for typical working hours
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## 247 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.

## 248 Exempt Minutes

### RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

## 249 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 22 January 2025.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....