

Shropshire Council  
Legal and Democratic Services  
Shirehall  
Abbey Foregate  
Shrewsbury  
SY2 6ND

Date: Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Committee:**  
**Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date:** Thursday, 14 November 2024  
**Time:** 2.00 pm  
**Venue:** Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting.  
The Agenda is attached.

There will be some access to the meeting room for members of the press and public, but this will be limited. If you wish to attend the meeting, please email [democracy@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@shropshire.gov.uk) to check that a seat will be available for you.

Please click [here](#) to view the livestream of the meeting on the date and time stated above.

The recording of the event will also be made available shortly after the meeting on the Shropshire Council YouTube Channel: [Here](#)

Tim Collard  
Assistant Director - Legal and Governance

**Members of Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Joyce Barrow (Chairman)	Nick Hignett
Steve Davenport (Vice Chairman)	Alan Mosley
Garry Burchett	Ed Potter
Rachel Connolly	Rob Wilson
Julian Dean	Paul Wynn
Roger Evans	

Your Committee Officer is:

**Sarah Townsend Committee Officer**

Tel: 01743 257721  
Email: [sarah.townsend@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.townsend@shropshire.gov.uk)

# **AGENDA**

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

## **2 Disclosable Interests**

Members are reminded that they must declare their disclosable pecuniary interests and other registrable or non-registrable interests in any matter being considered at the meeting as set out in Appendix B of the Members' Code of Conduct and consider if they should leave the room prior to the item being considered. Further advice can be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

## **3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 4)**

To consider the minutes of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024. (Attached).

Contact: Tim Ward (Tel: 01743 257713)

## **4 Public Question Time**

To receive any questions or petitions from the public of which notice has been given. The deadline for notification for this meeting is 12 noon on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

## **5 Member Question Time**

To receive any questions of which Members of the Council have given notice. The deadline for notification for this meeting is 12 noon on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

## **6 Strategic Developments relating to water management and water quality (Pages 5 - 24)**

Members to receive information on the various different projects and strategies that influence water management and water quality. (Attached).

Contact: Mark Barrow (Tel: 01743 258919)

## **7 Update against progress made against the recommendations from the River Water Quality Task and Finish Group (Pages 25 - 28)**

To receive and update on, and consider the progress and developments related to the implementation of the agreed recommendations from the River Water Quality Task and Finish Group. (Attached).

Contact: Tom Dodds (Tel: 01743 258518)

**8 Follow-up on Social Housing, the Housing Strategy Recommendations Implementation (Pages 29 - 40)**

The Assistant Director Homes and Communities will provide an update on progress against the actions from the Social Housing and Housing Strategy report that was considered by the Committee at their meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023. (Attached).

Contact: Jane Trethewey (Tel: 01743 258913)

**9 Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

To receive a verbal update regarding the future work programme of the Committee.

Contact: Tom Dodds (Tel: 01743 258518)

**10 Date/Time of Next Meeting of the Committee**

The Committee is scheduled to next meet on Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025 at 2.00 p.m.

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## Committee and Date

Economy and Environment  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14<sup>th</sup> November 2024

## **ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2024**

**In the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury,  
Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

**10.00 - 11.40 am**

**Responsible Officer:** Tim Ward Committee Officer

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

### **Present**

Councillors Steve Davenport (Vice Chairman), Garry Burchett, Rachel Connolly, Nick Hignett, Alan Mosley, Ed Potter, Rob Wilson, Nicholas Bardsley (Substitute) (substitute for Joyce Barrow), Julia Evans (Substitute) (substitute for Julian Dean) and Peggy Mullock (Substitute) (substitute for Paul Wynn)

### **13 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joyce Barrow, Julian Dean and Paul Wynn.

Councillor Nick Bardsley substituted for Councillor Joyce Barrow, Councillor Julia Evans substituted for Councillor Julian Dean and Councillor Peggy Mullock substituted for Councillor Paul Wynn.

Apologies for absence were also received from Mark Barrow (Executive Director Place).

### **14 Disclosable Interests**

There were no declarations made.

### **15 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

### **16 Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

## 17 Member Question Time

There were no questions from Members.

## 18 Draft Waste Minimisation Strategy

Members received the report of the Assistant Director – Homes & Communities, which proposed the adoption of a new Waste Prevention Strategy for the period 2024 – 2030. In introducing the report, she reminded Members that a motion to create a new waste prevention strategy was unanimously supported at Council in December 2023 and that subsequently a new strategy had been produced.

The Technical Support and Projects Manager, Waste advised that Shropshire produced a higher quantity of waste than both its neighbouring councils and its statistical neighbours which was in part due to the demographic makeup of the county. He informed the meeting that the two highest waste streams were garden waste and food waste and commented that the high levels of garden waste reflected the types of dwellings in the county which were mainly detached and semi-detached with large gardens and that there was work to be done around educating people in order to reduce avoidable food waste.

A Member commented that the majority of new build were detached houses and stated that we should be looking to create more mansion blocks in our urban town centres which would be good for both the economy and in terms of waste reduction. He asked how planning could contribute to the strategy. The Technical Support and Projects Manager, Waste commented that in the past planning policies had been used and that it may be worth reviewing the current policies and seeing what new policies could be introduced. The Assistant Director – Homes & Communities commented that the Big Town Plan in Shrewsbury was looking at the potential to put larger residential blocks in the town centre. She added that there was work being done in the market towns to look at opportunities such as flats over shops and conversions of unused shops and other buildings.

A Member raised the importance of repair cafes and furniture reuse schemes and asked whether enough was done to promote such schemes. Other comments were made around the need to educate the public more and ways of doing this. It was agreed that Town and Parish Councils were a valuable resource in terms of communications.

A Member asked what progress had been made in renegotiating the contract with Veolia in order to get best value for money and asked whether the committee could receive a report at a future meeting. The Assistant Director – Homes & Communities advised that talks were ongoing with Veolia with regards to the waste contract. She commented that forthcoming legislation and other changes within the waste industry would have an impact on both the Council and Veolia which would give the opportunity for a different approach and amendments to the contract. She agreed to bring an update report to a future meeting.

Other comments made were –

- A concern that there could be an increase in fly tipping as a result of the introduction of charges for green waste and the booking system for the Household Recycling Centres.
- The Council should set an example by phasing out the use of disposable cups especially at Council meetings.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee:

- a) Approve the Waste Prevention Strategy for Shropshire 2024-2030 for subsequent adoption by Council.
- b) Request that a report is brought to a future meeting updating the committee on work to update the waste contract.
- c) That Shropshire Council phases out the use of disposable cups on all its sites.

**19 Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer advised that in addition to the update report on the waste contract that the committee has requested, the next meeting would receive reports on River Water Quality, the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme and follow up items on the new Housing Developments Task and Finish Group's recommendations and the Social Housing and Housing Strategy Task and Finish Group's recommendations.

**20 Date/Time of Next Meeting of the Committee**

Members were advised that the Committee was scheduled to next meet on Thursday, 14th November 2024 at 2.00 p.m. at the Shirehall.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....

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# Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee- 14<sup>th</sup> November

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Shropshire Council and  
Water Management

Agenda Item 6

# Areas of work

- Integrated Water Management (*River Severn Partnership*)
- Flood Management and Development (*Local Plan and Riverside*)
- Water Quality and Nutrient Neutrality (*Clun Catchment*)
- National thought leadership and Innovation (*Advanced Wireless Innovation Region*)
- Liaison with Severn Trent Water (*Strategic and operational engagement*)
- Liaison with Regulators (*Partnership working and statutory consultee*)

# Flood Management and Water Security

- **Today flood zones across the catchment broadly affects...**
  - 117,000 homes
  - 10,250 business and 100,000+ jobs
  - 82,000 ha of agricultural land
  - 250km of main roads
- **Climate change impacts mean that by the year 2100 the River Severn...**
  - Will be on average 0.85m higher but up to 1.5m higher than current flood levels
  - But will be lower in summer – 25% less water available for abstraction
- **Frequency and severity of flooding is accelerating**
  - Three of worst five floods ever recorded happened in last four years
  - 1:20 year flood events have happened in each of the last three years



## River Sever Partnership – utilising our river network as an asset

Page 8



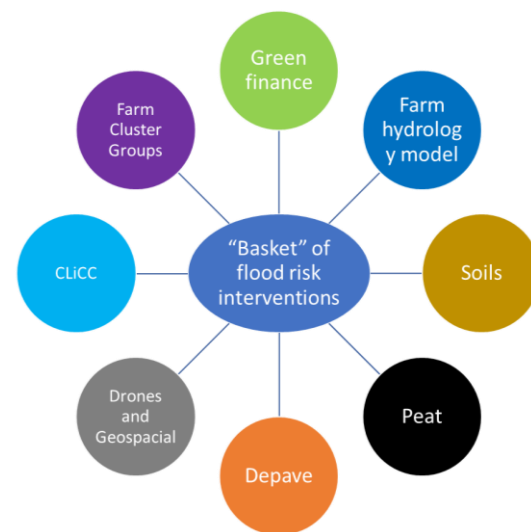
- **SC jointly chaired-** responding to a need to *do things differently*
- National support ongoing ministerial engagement, all party MP Caucus, ***national award winner*** for LGC and MJ Awards 2024
- Secured ***over £50million to date and £4million in the last 12months***
- ***Strategic programme*** across whole River Basin
  - Engagement and lobbying
  - Short term delivery
  - Longer term strategy

# Demonstrator Programme - Immediate Delivery and SC Led



## The Demonstrators

Project Name	
<u><a href="#">Guilsfield</a></u>	Natural flood management and soils
<u><a href="#">Reabrook</a></u>	Nature based water management across the river catchment
<u><a href="#">Perry and Peatlands</a></u>	Water storage potential in the farmed peatlands
<u><a href="#">Morda -De-Pave</a></u>	Urban water management, blue-green spaces in town and villages
<u><a href="#">Centre for Living with Climate Change - CLIC</a></u>	Innovation, Education, Learning and Skills for the Future
<u><a href="#">Geospatial</a></u>	Remote sensing and drone technology mapping catchments
<u><a href="#">Attingham Estate Nature-Based Solutions</a></u>	Estate-wide nature-based water management
<u><a href="#">Marches Future Farming</a></u>	Water management, farmer groups and future economics



# 2100+ Climate Resilience Strategy – collaborative change

- **SC partnership work** with regulators, water companies, local authorities etc
- Joint approach to **long term management** of flooding from all sources.
- Understanding of wider context- **alignment to growth plans, LNRS**

## What's been happening?

The Environment Agency have worked with the River Severn Partnership to 'agree the scope of our climate resilience work which we can all commit to including':

1. Partner views on what should be included
2. How partners will be involved
3. Shaping the approach of how we work together and with others

Agreed a data baselining group to help develop and shape the approach to Adaptation Pathway Planning in the Severn catchment

## Next steps....

- Developing our **Full Business Case** to unlock further funding to develop this work
- 5<sup>th</sup> December – next partner workshop where we will be presenting draft **Adaptation Pathways** for our focus areas on the **River Avon** and **Upper Severn** for partner feedback





## The Challenge



The amount of water we need to store upstream of Shrewsbury to protect against regular flooding will be in excess of 65 billion litres of water. That's roughly equivalent to filling...

**57**



Wembley Stadiums

**43**

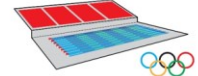


Principality Stadiums

or

**26,000**

Olympic size swimming pools



Portfolio of engineered & nature-based interventions to manage/mitigate flood risk



Scheme focusses on enhancement of bio-diversity & economic/social outcomes for communities

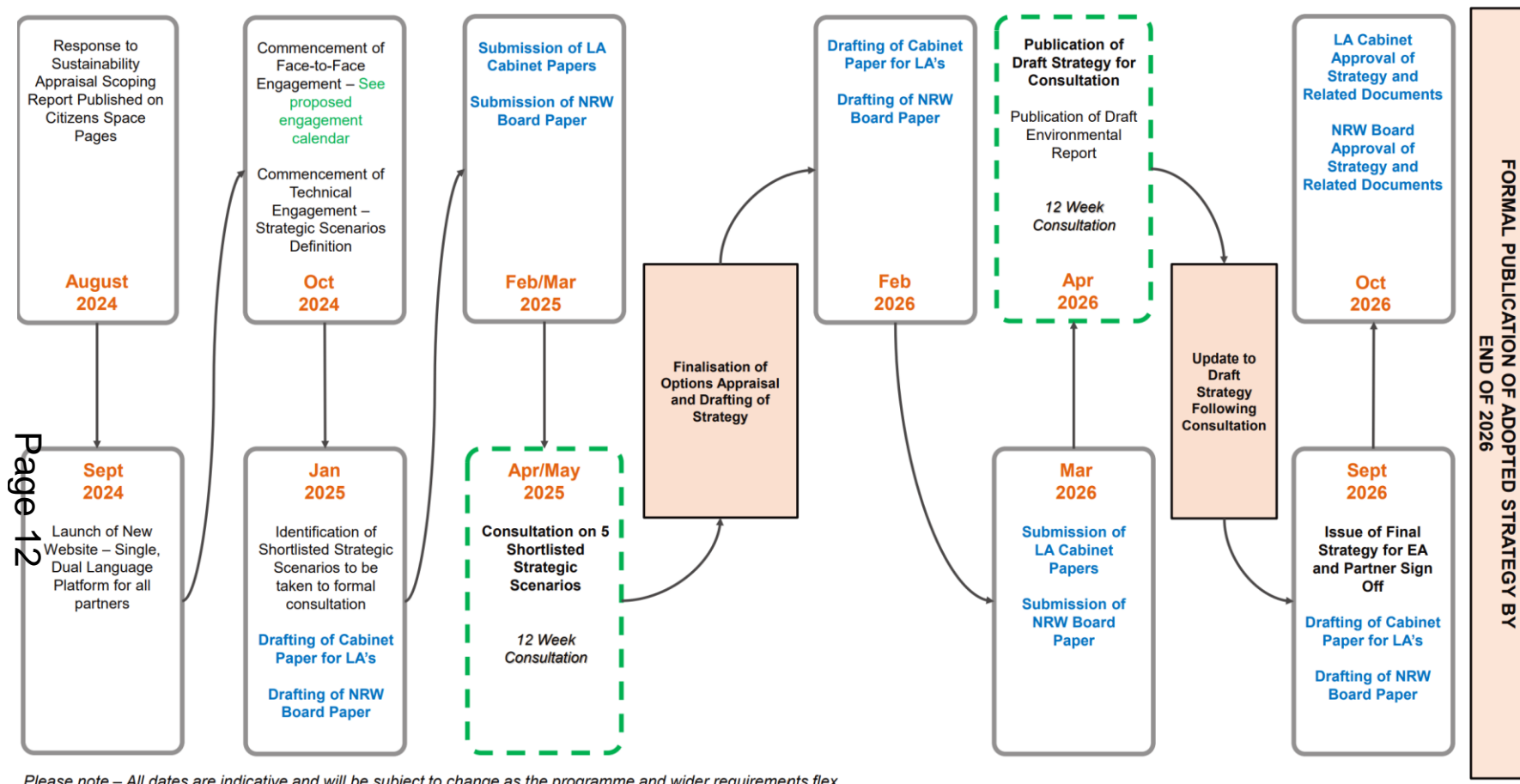


Investment requirement is expected to be c.£450m



Funding sources to include public & private sector investment

# Simplified Engagement Timeline – Severn Valley Water Management Scheme



Please note – All dates are indicative and will be subject to change as the programme and wider requirements flex

- SC part of **Joint Project Board**
- Leading **benefits, funding and finance**
- Partner engagement



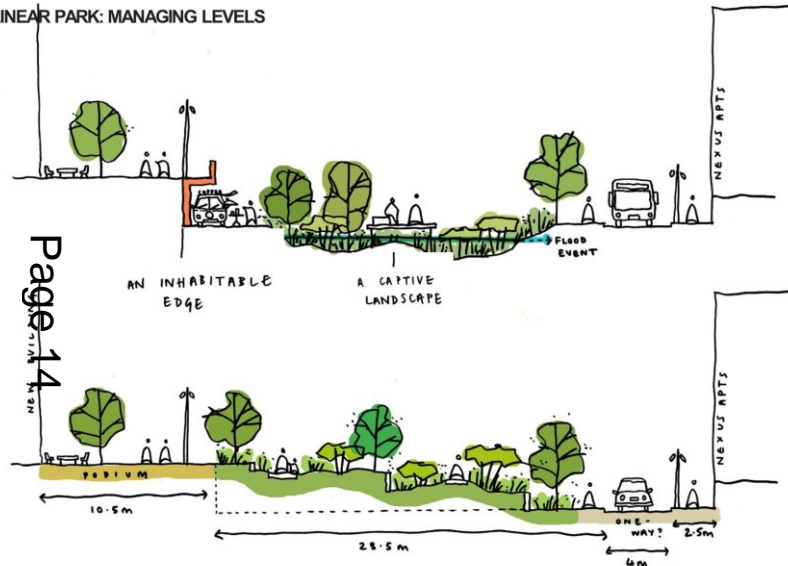
# Flood Management and Development

- NPPF and integrated water management thinking is currently out of step:
  - NPPF requirement to model from the outset and assume future scenarios to design to.
  - Defra adaptive thinking to not lock in decisions but monitor climate changes over time and make decisions as need.

# Riverside Redevelopment

- SC piloting an ***adaptive masterplanning approach***
- ***Joint work*** with Severn Trent Water (DWMP priority area) and Environment Agency

LINEAR PARK: MANAGING LEVELS



## Proposed Linear Defence

### Updates to make defence more feasible:

- Shorter (400m)
- Lower
- More benefits
- Find new ways of funding

ARCADIS



# Water Quality and Nutrient Neutrality

- Historic focus on flood prevention and water resource management to solve issues with the river rather than seeing it as an integrated system.
- Nutrient neutrality impacts on Wye and Clun catchments with embargo on development (c350 dwellings in Local Plan).
- Point and diffuse sources contributing requiring interventions and long term cultural change.
- Lack of clarity on what we interventions can be used -restoration and/or mitigation.

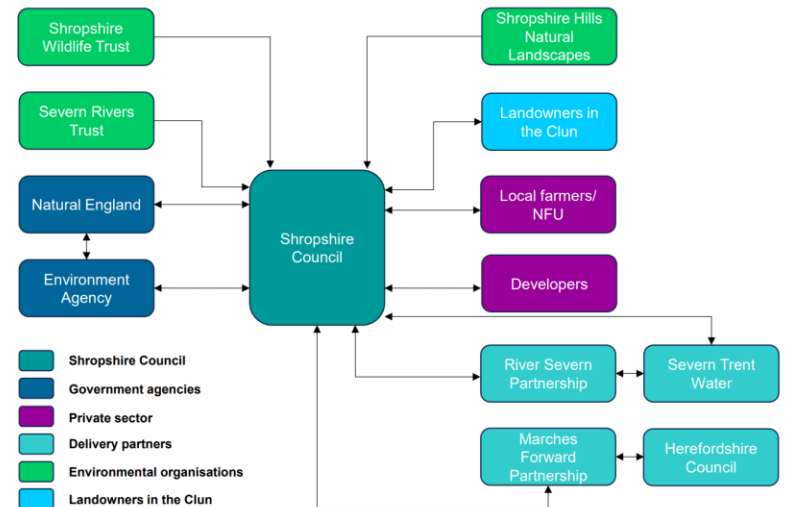
# Clun Catchment Mitigation

- **SC lead role in mitigating nutrients** from proposed developments
- **Clun Liaison Group**- Regulators, Water Company and LA
- **Commissioned a mitigation options review** and draft implementation plan for preferred delivery model has been completed.

The summary of the assessments is shown below. Third-party schemes and third-party trading platforms are left blank as they failed to pass the gateway assessment.

Criterion	Weighting	A – Developer-led mitigation	B – Local authority strategic scheme	C – Third-party scheme	D – Local authority trading platform	E – Third-party trading platform
Deliverability	2	2.4	2.5		1.9	
Technical suitability	2	2.3	1.8		1.8	
Interface and dependencies	1	1.8	2.6		1.8	
Funding availability	1	1.7	2.3		2.0	
<b>Weighted average score</b>		<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>		<b>1.8</b>	
<b>Normalised score</b>		<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.2</b>		<b>1.0</b>	

Figure 6-2: Key stakeholders and delivery partners





# Clun Catchment Water Quality

- **Funded by the RSPAWIR**
- **Baselining and real-time monitoring of phosphate levels in the River Clun**
- **Evidencing the effectiveness of sediment traps**
- **Endangered freshwater pearl mussels at risk of marginal nutrient imbalances**
- **Measurement needs to be highly accurate**

## **The project will**

- **Demonstrate the potential to replicate manual testing**
- **Help unlock sustainable housing development**
- **Supplementary projects in North Shropshire (& Worcs)**

# Innovation

- SC thought leadership- Flood and Coast, Adept, RICS, RTPI
- Treasury visit and ongoing engagement with minsters and Defra SoS
- Marches Forward Partnership positioning as a Trailblazing Green Growth Region
- £3.7million secured for RSP Innovation Region for Advanced Wireless and now in discussions about potential to extend.
- Defra cross water policy lead support- focus on governance
- Interest from NIC and NICW

# RSPAWIR Use Cases & Projects



## WATER

- Precision Irrigation
- Smart Abstraction
- Rainfall Nowcasting
- Real-time Water Quality Measurement



## RURAL

- Digital Innovation Farms
- Agricultural Roadshow
- Ammonia Reduction
- Agri-tech on Commercial Farms



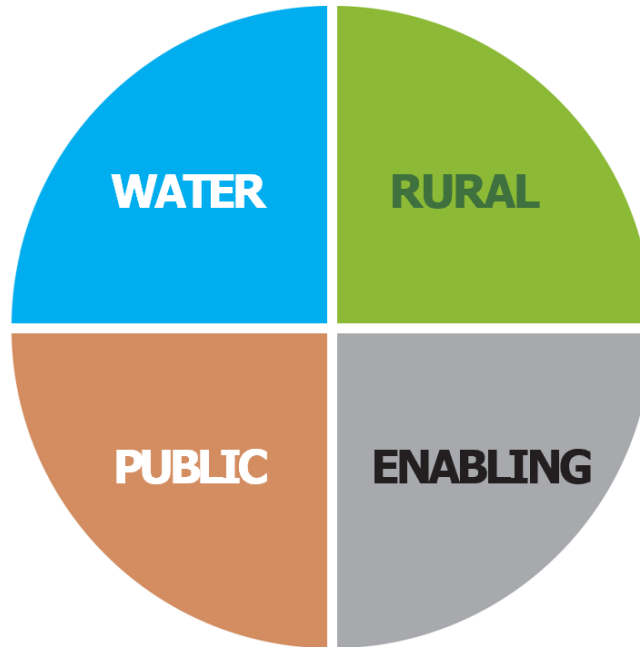
## PUBLIC

- Digital Champions
- Policy in a Box
- Small Scale Use Cases



## ENABLING

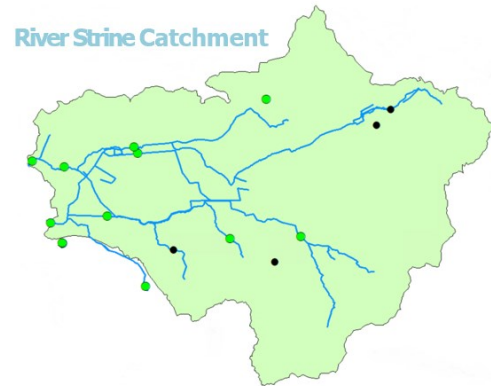
- Coverage Survey
- Booster Loan
- Small Grants
- Use Case Concept support



# Sub Catchment Smart Abstraction

- **Wireless sensors providing real-time guidance of when to “scalp” & when to “spill”**
- **Led by Cranfield University & involving 10 local landowners**
- **Fully Operational – Generates data at 15 min intervals from new & existing sensors**
- **Combining new & historical data to build a predictive hydrological model**
- **Significant potential for water resource & flood management if scaled up**

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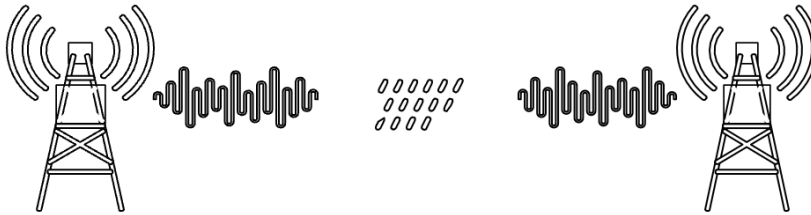
# Precision Irrigation

- Real-time irrigation using weather, soil moisture & evapotranspiration sensors
- Led by Cranfield University with the University of Cordoba
- Operational since June at PDM south of Shifnal
- Building a data led Irrigation Management System
- Aiming to boost yield by 10% and reduce energy and water costs



# Network as a Sensor

- Partnership with Vodafone
- Low atmosphere virtual rain gauges
- Adding to radar & ground surface water measurements
- 170 datapoints
- Working with the Met Office and local groups to
  - Improve weather modelling
  - Find new ways to exploit the data
  - React to real time rainfall events
- Clear links to other use cases & Local Authority Flood Response

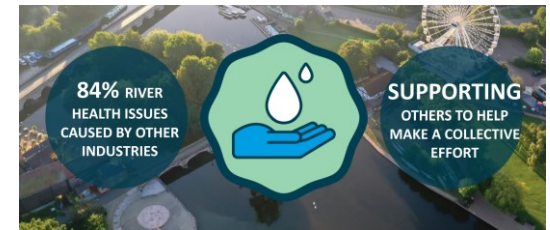


# Engagement and Influence

## Severn Trent Water

Strategically-RSP Board, Local Plan, Clun but more to do

Operationally- Effective joint working on flood events and with projects



## Environment Agency

Strategically- RSP Joint Chairs, Clun

Operationally- statutory consultee, partnership projects but more to do

# Further information

<https://www.riverseverpartnership.org.uk/>

(River Severn Partnership, Demonstrator Projects, Advanced Wireless Innovation Region)

<https://severnvalleywatermanagementscheme.commonplace.is/>

(Severn Valley Water Management Scheme)

<https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/river-severn-partnership-adaptation-pathway-project?preview=true>

(Climate Resilience Strategy)

## Updates against River Water Quality Task and Finish Group Recommendations

*Further to the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report of the River Water Quality Task and Finish Group on the 9 November 2023 the Task and Finish group identified what they have defined as hard recommendations and softer recommendations. They expect that the hard recommendations will, in most cases, have a more direct impact on reducing sewage pollution and be more measurable in terms of delivery and impact.*

Recommendations		Lead Officer	Shropshire Council Actions
<b>Hard recommendations:</b>			
1.	That Shropshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority, should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt Grampian Conditions in Shropshire to ensure that new developments will be joined to appropriate infrastructure and access to treatment works with the sufficient current and future capacity in place.</li> <li>• Promote the requirement for grey water systems and rainwater capture as part of new housing developments, reducing the use of drinking water to water gardens and clean cars. As part of this, Members recommend that the feasibility of introducing supplementary planning documents (SPD) should be explored and progressed.</li> </ul>	Planning – Charlotte Morrison, Edward West, Tabitha Lythe	<p>To review Grampian conditions and establish how they would operate in Shropshire and whether the outcomes identified in the recommendations can be delivered using different approaches.</p> <p>To confirm options to make best use of water including whether grey water systems and rainwater capture will be a feature of housing developments in Shropshire in the future.</p> <p>To confirm the feasibility of an SPD in relation to grey water systems and rainwater capture.</p>
2.	That Shropshire Council, as the highways authority, should proactively engage with and encourage Severn Trent Water in their progression of works that will increase the separation of rainwater run-off from wastewater, including highways runoff, thereby helping to reduce the risk of overwhelming sewage infrastructure and treatment works.	John Bellis	To establish a programme of proof of concept and test and learn projects with Severn Trent Water to provide evidence of what can work and inform a pipeline of projects to take advantage of investment opportunities.
3.	That more monitoring of the health of rivers and waterways needs to take place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severn Trent Water should increase the frequency of monitoring and reporting to once a week and ensure that testing occurs before and after releases. This data needs</li> </ul>	Mark Barrow, Hayley Deighton	Developing partnership working and wider relationships with Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency to promote improving the quality of waterways, including through strategic interventions in the catchment area.

Recommendations	Lead Officer	Shropshire Council Actions
<p>to be made available and the results made visible and easily accessible and understandable e.g. using trend charts and maps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System partners, including Shropshire Council, should work with citizen scientists to identify and put in place mechanisms that will allow them to continue to deliver and develop testing and monitoring that enhances the picture of what is happening beneath the surface of rivers and waterways.</li> </ul>		<p>Encouraging increased testing of river water quality by identifying and pursuing opportunities with system partners including developing the infrastructure for remote testing and reporting e.g. utilising mobile digital networks.</p>
<p>4. That Shropshire Council is a 'Place Leader'. Within this there are a number of roles and actions that the Council should take to enable communities to help contribute towards improving river water quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and provide access to small grants or accessible funding such as through initiatives like civic social crowdfunding that can be used to enable communities to take forward work that results in improved river water quality e.g. funding equipment and lab testing of citizen scientists work, and funding the River Health Checker app.</li> <li>• Supporting and enabling initiatives and applications for Bathing Water Status.</li> <li>• Assessing the feasibility of managing the River Health Checker App and promoting its use locally with stakeholders in the system and communities.</li> </ul>	Mark Barrow	<p>To take a leading role in the local area and in partnerships that encompass places that either impact on the river water quality in Shropshire or are impacted by the river water quality in Shropshire.</p> <p>Within this work establish the opportunities and feasibility to offer small grants or other forms of accessible funding.</p>

The following softer recommendations were made through the River Water Quality work. The expectation is that these recommendations should be delivered through the wider delivery of the hard recommendations above and through the implementation of strategic working across the River Severn Partnership, The Severn Valley Water Management Scheme and The Marches Forward Partnership. The implementation of these recommendations should be monitored through the work looking at the hard recommendations as set out above.

<b>Recommendations</b>		<b>Lead Officer</b>
<b>Softer recommendations:</b>		
5.	That system partners confirm shared outcomes and objectives in relation to river water quality and the environment and use these to jointly and consistently lobby Government to realise a regulatory framework and requirements that encourages water companies and other stakeholders who are part of the system, to target and achieve the best environmental outcomes.	Mark Barrow
6.	That local representatives, including Shropshire Council, should work closely with Severn Trent Water to inform how and where the recently announced investment to reduce sewage pollution takes place. This should include enabling and ensuring the engagement between agencies and with local communities and help to realise the greatest benefit for the environment of the resources being brought to bear.	Mark Barrow
7.	That system partners work to support increasing the visibility of the data and enabling greater understanding of what is actually happening in Shropshire rivers and water ways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the adoption of the River Health Checker App</li> <li>• Enable and promote consistency of recording, data structures and access to the data, using those nationally described and adopted by other areas of the country.</li> <li>• Encouraging effective use of the data, and promoting the development of visualisation, including engaging with local further and higher education colleges.</li> </ul>	Mark Barrow
8.	That, once a reduction of sewage releases has been put in place, Shropshire Council progresses activity, directly through its own services and responsibilities, and through its partnership working as a Place Leader, to reduce the flow of other pollutants from agricultural and highways run-off.	Mark Barrow
9.	That the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee form a standing group that tracks climate and environmental topics and issues including river water quality and flooding, keeping abreast of plans and developments, the results of monitoring, and the impact and progress across the relevant stakeholders. To inform it's work it may specify key measures of activity and progress that it wants to review. The group should meet every 6 months and report back into the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee twice a year.	Joyce Barrow

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## Committee and Date

**Economy and  
Environment Overview  
and Scrutiny  
Committee**

**14 November 2024**

Item

Public



## Social Housing and the Housing Strategy

### Responsible Overview and Scrutiny Officer:

Jane Trethewey

email: jane.trethewey@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 258913

### Oversight and Scrutiny Chair:

Joyce Barrow

## 1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report offers an interim update to the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the Housing Strategy action plan, which was last reviewed on 23 April 2024.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Social housing is a key element in Shropshire's housing market, ensuring access to suitable accommodation for those unable to afford it through the open market. Shropshire Council's Housing Strategy is integral to supporting this tenure, aligning with the objectives of The Shropshire Plan, where housing is recognised as vital to a robust economy.
- 2.2. The recommendations made through this work aim to shape and inform Shropshire's Housing Strategy and help to bring the Strategic Housing function more centrally into the thinking, planning and delivery of other key strategies such as the economic growth strategy and transport plans.
- 2.3. The report acknowledges progress made since the previous Overview and Scrutiny committee discussion and outlines plans for further necessary work.

## 3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That the committee notes the progress being made towards delivering the recommendations agreed upon at Cabinet in September 2023 and the progress against the actions from the Social Housing and Housing Strategy reports presented to committee on 9 November 2023 and 23 April 2024.
- 3.2. That the committee reviews and provides feedback on the action plan delivery and planned work and agrees to receive future updates on progress.

## Report

### 4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. In the last review, a key risk was identified should Shropshire Council not progress previously agreed Cabinet recommendations. This would result in missed opportunities to maximise the benefits of social housing for those in need and in support of the local rural economy.
- 4.2. Additionally, less social housing could lead to higher costs to the Council, as lower income households may be displaced out of the county or require the Council to invest in more expensive temporary accommodation. However, by taking effective action to improve housing options, the Council can mitigate these risks and improve outcomes for households and their communities.
- 4.3. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy requires the alignment of Shropshire Council's housing objectives with its broader financial goals to continue addressing housing needs effectively.

### 5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Shropshire Council is currently managing an unprecedented financial position as budgeted for in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and detailed in the monthly monitoring position presented to Cabinet. This demonstrates that significant management action is required over the remainder of the financial year to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all Cabinet Reports provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. Where non-essential spend is identified within the Council, this will be reduced. This may involve:
  - scaling down initiatives,
  - changing the scope,
  - delaying implementation, or
  - extending delivery timescales.
- 5.2. Several of the priorities in the proposed action plan are already in hand or have been agreed, and will be funded by existing resources, for example, grant funding from central Government or through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. Each further project associated with the strategy, where delivered by the Council, will be subject to its own funding approval, contingent upon a thorough business case evaluation, availability of funding and appropriate

approvals. This approach ensures that financial considerations are assessed individually for each project, maintaining transparency and accountability in resource allocation. It should be noted that opportunities will also be taken to work with Registered Provider landlords and others to support delivery of the Strategy.

- 5.3 The implications of the recent budget announcement by the Chancellor have yet to be fully analysed at the time of writing. However, the reduction in the discount rate for Right to Buy properties, and the change to allow Councils to retain the full receipt from all Right to Buy sales will benefit the Housing Revenue Account and provide a stronger capital base for newbuild delivery. Longer term confidence in rent charges will also support effective business planning and investment in the Council's existing housing stock.

## 6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. There are no specific climate change implications arising from the report recommendations. However, when implementing the action plan, officers should also set out whether there are any impacts on climate change because of their suggested course of action.
- 6.2. Providing suitable housing in communities near work, education and services, can reduce reliance on motor vehicles, thereby lowering energy and fuel consumption. Additionally, ensuring homes are energy-efficient, either as new build properties or through retrofitting carbon reduction measures, along with the use of sustainable construction practices, will contribute to reducing carbon emissions and mitigating the environmental impact of housing development.

## 7. Background

- 7.1. In 2023, members of the former Communities Overview Committee, and subsequently the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, undertook an enquiry into social housing in Shropshire, to contribute to the planned review of the Housing Strategy.
- 7.2. The objective of this work was:
- To review and understand housing need in Shropshire;
  - To understand the different types of social housing, and the wider description of affordable housing and its forms, for example, key worker housing;
  - To identify and consider specific challenges related to the housing market in Shropshire; and
  - To identify key messages and make evidence-based recommendations to inform the review and update of the Housing Strategy.
- 7.3. A range of findings were identified from this work, which were summarised in the report to the 20 July 2023 committee meeting and were relayed in the committee's report to the Cabinet meeting of 6 September 2023.
- 7.4. Six recommendations were made to shape and inform the Housing Strategy and bring the Strategic Housing focus into the thinking, planning and delivery of other key strategies such as the economic growth strategy and transport plans.

- 7.5. A further recommendation was that feedback be provided to the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 9 November 2023 to confirm which recommendations have been accepted and which have not. Also, that an action plan should set out what will be done, and by when, to deliver the accepted recommendations, and where recommendations have not been accepted an explanation should be provided.
- 7.6. It was agreed to review the recommendations and progress of this work at the committee meeting of 14 November 2024. This update shows the progress and actions taken regarding these, and highlights changes that have arisen, including those stemming from the medium-term financial strategy.

## 8. Additional Information

8.1. The six recommendations from the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed by Cabinet are as follows:

- Following the implementation of the revised allocations policy and scheme, the Council should ensure that this is adhered to by all registered providers through regular monitoring to guarantee those in the highest need are allocated housing.
- The Council should recognise the importance of the strategic housing function and how housing is integral to planning policy, social care and economic development, and therefore the need to strengthen the relationship between these functions.
- The Council should promote a place-based approach to housing and economic development, which includes commissioning affordable and supported housing based on evidenced need to ensure that housing priorities are delivered in the right place. Thus, responding to the fact that Shropshire is made up of any different communities across a large geographic area with different needs.
- Investment in social housing must acknowledge the specific needs of rural settlements, therefore products need to be tailored accordingly. For example, intergenerational supported housing, which could include staff accommodation, would help to promote a preventative agenda in villages and small towns (e.g., preventing admissions to hospital and care homes, and supporting people with learning disabilities and mental health problems to live independently).
- The Council should explore and pursue opportunities to attract funding, such as Community Land Trusts, and lobby for new products specifically to support the rural economy which will not only deliver the preventative agenda, but also balance the housing market and help to ensure that people can continue to afford to live in communities in Shropshire. For example, innovative funding products to fund intergenerational living and for sub-market private rented accommodation for key workers who are not necessarily able to access social housing, as they are not in a high priority reasonable preference category.
- The Council should review and implement any new legislation on short-term lets, helping to ensure that the balance is struck between the economic gain to communities and places through increased visitor spend, against the availability of homes to buy and rent where there is local concern.

- 8.2. A range of actions have already been delivered or are underway to address these recommendations. Further actions are now being scoped or planned to address them more fully. The Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 lists these for review.

## 9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The findings and recommendations of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee are now being used to inform the development of housing related strategy and policy, with progress reflected in the Action Plan appended.

### List of Background Papers

- **Cabinet 6 September 2023 - Social Housing and Reviewing the Housing Strategy**
- **Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20 July 2023 - Social Housing and Reviewing the Housing Strategy**
- **Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 April 2024 – Social Housing and Reviewing the Housing Strategy**

**Local Member:** Not applicable.

**Appendices:** APPENDIX 1 Action Plan

## APPENDIX 1 ACTION PLAN

	Recommendation	Action	Timescales
1	Following the implementation of the revised allocations policy and scheme, the Council should ensure that this is adhered to by all registered providers through regular monitoring to guarantee those in the highest need are allocated housing.	<p><b>Action to date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The revised allocations policy and scheme is in use.</li> <li>Shropshire's main RPs were contacted individually and signed Nominations Agreements to ensure lettings are made in line with policy.</li> <li>The Housing Client Officer arranged formal monitoring meetings of RP obligations as contained within the Nominations Agreement, which commenced in April 2024, and will be reviewed at quarterly meetings.</li> <li>The Housing Service regularly challenges landlords who reject the highest banded bidders for a property, to ensure that this is legitimate. This has resulted in a higher number of lets being made to Band 1 bidders.</li> </ul> <p><b>Further action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closer working between the HomePoint team in Housing Services and the Housing Enabling team in Planning should see earlier exchanges with landlords around the first lettings of newbuild homes, to ensure that they are identified for cases in highest need.</li> <li><b>Amended action:</b> A planned upgrade of the Abritas system that sits behind HomePoint will improve reporting so that concerns can be identified and addressed earlier. The upgrade was previously due to delivery by April 2024, however, testing and implementation of the upgraded system has now completed with the upgraded system now live from October 2024.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July 2024</li> <li>October 2024</li> </ul>
2	The Council should recognise the importance of the strategic housing function and how housing is integral to planning policy,	<p><b>Action to date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new Housing Strategy Officer post was created and appointed into in summer 2023, creating additional capacity in the strategic housing function.</li> </ul>	

	<p>social care and economic development, and therefore the need to strengthen the relationship between these functions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Housing Strategy and Development Manager post, now vacant, was intended to be recruited into. However, in line with the savings plans set out in the MTFS, this position has now been deleted. The Strategy Officer will now report to an existing alternative line manager post which has been revised, with the title of Strategic Housing and Commissioning Manager</li> <li>• Planning policy and social care colleagues attend the Housing Executive Board meetings, to share information and action on strategic housing matters.</li> <li>• The Housing strategy has been identified as a key element of the Marches Strategic Partnership and the Strategic Infrastructure Partnership, where Shropshire Council working with neighbouring counties and with other partners to ensure that appropriate plans are put in place to meet need into the future.</li> <li>• <b>Action completed:</b> Economic Development colleagues have joined Housing Executive Board meetings to ensure links between key service areas.</li> <li>• The Housing Executive Board Programme Plan was refreshed in April 2024 with revised Terms of Reference to ensure activity is focused on those areas which will best deliver on the strategic priorities of the Council.</li> <li>• The Housing Strategy has been consolidated to include affordable, intermediate housing, ensuring it accounts for the rural nature of the county. The target start date was September 2024, and while the strategy remains in draft form, further work is required to fully develop it. Although this may result in some delays to its implementation, it is crucial to ensure the final strategy is robust, cross-departmental and informed by comprehensive data.</li> <li>• The Council has commissioned Housing LIN, funded by external grants, to complete a strategic needs assessment for Shropshire's supported accommodation. This assessment will provide a baseline of current provision across different accommodation types and models, compare it with best practice elsewhere, and offer recommendations for our future strategic direction.</li> </ul>	
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		<p><b>Further action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Amended action:</b> A planned restructure to move housing enabling colleagues from planning policy to Housing Strategy has been suspended indefinitely, pending wider Council restructuring.</li> <li>• <b>Amended action:</b> The Council's Planning Policy and Housing Enablement services will commence the review of the Type and Affordability of Housing Supplementary Planning Document following adoption of the draft Shropshire Local Plan. This was targeted for September 2024, but is now due in spring 2025, following the delays to the Local Plan. This document will provide detailed advice for housebuilders regarding the Council's requirements and priorities for housing, thereby supporting the understanding and application of housing policies in the adopted Development Plan. In this way, it will also support the implementation of the Council's Housing Strategy.</li> <li>• <b>New action:</b> To review the findings of the Housing LIN assessment and evaluate how the recommendations can be integrated into the Housing strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May 2025</li> <li>• November 2024</li> </ul>
3	<p>The Council should promote a place-based approach to housing and economic development, which includes commissioning affordable and supported housing based on evidenced need so as to ensure that housing priorities are delivered in the right place. Thus, responding to the fact that Shropshire is made up of many different communities across a large geographic area with different needs.</p>	<p><b>Action to date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Housing Commissioning Priorities document was drafted and issued to all Registered Providers and to Cornovii Developments Limited in summer 2023, planned to guide development programmes. This is based upon evidenced need derived from the Housing Needs Survey 2022 and includes reference to general needs and supported housing.</li> <li>• Planning consent was achieved for a new housing scheme at Coton Hill House, Shrewsbury, to provide supported accommodation for homeless people to enable them to move on into settled homes.</li> </ul>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Proposed use of the Tannery East building for a period of three years to provide temporary accommodation was approved at Cabinet on 17 July 2024, subject to planning approval. Cornovii is to deliver 30 Private Rented Sector homes available from August 2025, for which key workers will receive first preference if they meet local lettings criteria.</li><li><b>Amended action:</b> After further consideration and consultation with the relevant stakeholders, it has been determined that a review of the Tenancy Strategy is not necessary at this time, as the existing strategy effectively achieves our affordable housing goals.</li><li>Preferences for the type and tenure of housing have been outlined, laying the groundwork for the Housing Strategy for Shrewsbury, aligning with the Big Town Plan. However, progress has been limited pending further guidance on infrastructure requirements.</li><li>A final report was created in August 2024 based upon the findings of the Housing Needs Survey (<a href="#">link here</a>) allowing better evidenced decisions to be made.</li></ul> <p><b>Further action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Amended action:</b> We acknowledge the need for continued work in developing a housing strategy for Shrewsbury, linking to the Big Town Plan, economic goals, and the housing needs evidenced in the Housing Needs Survey. Homes England funding has permitted us to procure consultancy support to help define the housing element of the Smithfield Riverside scheme, which will help to contribute to the shaping of wider housing plans for the town.</li><li>Opportunities are actively being sought to meet specific housing needs across Shropshire, in support of a range of different resident groups.</li><li><b>New action:</b> The Housing Commissioning Priorities are to be regularly updated and will form a key function of the work of the Housing Executive Board, in terms of oversight and monitoring of delivery of new affordable homes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ongoing</li></ul>
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<b>4</b>	<p>Investment in social housing must acknowledge the specific needs of rural settlements, therefore products need to be tailored accordingly. For example, intergenerational supported housing, which could include staff accommodation, would help to promote a preventative agenda in villages and small towns (e.g., preventing admissions to hospital and care homes, and supporting people with learning disabilities and mental health problems to live independently).</p>	<p><b>Action to date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Housing Commissioning Priorities document includes reference to supported housing requirements and identifies a range of locations where newbuild development will be appropriate.</li> <li>Cabinet has approved the Sustainable Affordable Warmth Strategy addressing the investment needs of rural and urban homes.</li> <li>The Independent Living and Specialist Accommodation Strategy was approved at Cabinet on 26 September 2024 following an eight week public and stakeholder consultation which was extended</li> <li>The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy was approved at Council on 28 September 2024 following an eight week public and stakeholder consultation</li> </ul> <p><b>Further action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>New action:</b> The new affordable, intermediate and rural housing strategy will be consolidated with the Housing Strategy (end date 2025) into a single comprehensive document. This consolidation ensures cohesive planning for housing priorities in future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>November 2024</b></li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<p>The Council should explore and pursue opportunities to attract funding, such as Community Land Trusts, and lobby for new products specifically to support the rural economy which will not only deliver the preventative agenda, but also balance the housing market and help to</p>	<p><b>Action to date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council officers meet regularly with Homes England as the main funder of social housing in England, as well as with WMCA which has recently been granted devolved funding for housing investment, to lobby for funding to support Shropshire's housing priorities.</li> <li>The establishment of the Marches Strategic Infrastructure Partnership has initiated discussions on funding for rural housing, alongside our neighbouring Councils with similar demographic and</li> </ul>	

	<p>ensure that people can continue to afford to live in communities in Shropshire. For example, innovative funding products to fund intergenerational living and for sub-market private rented accommodation for key workers who are not necessarily able to access social housing, as they are not in a high priority reasonable preference category.</p>	<p>geographic challenges. This has now been captured into the Marches Forward work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>New Action delivered:</b> We have initiated meetings with health and social care colleagues to discuss affordable and intermediate housing options within a rural setting with a view to informing commissioning priorities and the housing strategy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Further action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An affordable and intermediate housing options strategy will be initiated. Following discussions, it has been decided to consolidate the affordable and intermediate housing strategy into the housing strategy, extending its scope beyond its original end date of 2025. The decision aims to comprehensively address the challenges faced by rural settlements and market towns.</li> <li>• The Housing sub-group of the Marches Strategic Infrastructure Partnership will identify opportunities to lobby and bid for funding to address the housing needs of the rural economy, with the intention of having more weight as a group than Shropshire on its own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>October/November 2024</b></li> <li>• <b>Ongoing</b></li> </ul>
6	<p>The Council should review and implement any new legislation on short-term lets, helping to ensure that the balance is struck between the economic gain to communities and places through increased visitor spend, against the availability of homes to buy and rent where there is local concern.</p>	<p><b>Action to date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National policy discussions on short term residential lets are being monitored. However, no new legislation has yet been issued for implementation locally.</li> </ul> <p><b>Further action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with the Housing sub-group of the Marches Strategic Infrastructure Partnership, opportunities will be identified to lobby for legislation relating to short-term lets, to address the impact this has on availability of homes for local residents.</li> <li>• New legislation will be implemented as appropriate to ensure that the visitor economy and local housing needs are well balanced.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ongoing</b></li> <li>• <b>Ongoing</b></li> </ul>

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