



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Guildhall,
Frankwell Quay,
Shrewsbury
SY3 8HQ

Date: Wednesday, 3 December 2025

Committee: Council

Date: Thursday, 11 December 2025

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ

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

Members of the Council – a briefing note will be circulated by e-mail prior to the meeting with important housekeeping details and arrangements for the meeting.

Members of the Public – If you wish to attend the meeting, please e-mail democracy@shropshire.gov.uk to check whether a seat will be available for you.

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

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

Tim Collard
Service Director – Legal, Governance and Planning

Duncan Borrowman
(Chairman)

Gary Groves (Vice-Chair)

Heather Kidd (Leader)

Alex Wagner (Deputy Leader)

Sho Abdul

Caroline Bagnall

Elizabeth Barker

Bernie Bentick

Neil Bentley

Ed Bird

Jeremy Blandford

Andy Boddington

Thomas Clayton

Susan Coleman

Rachel Connolly

Tom Dainty

Jamie Daniels

Rosemary Dartnall

David Davies

Pamela Davies

Andy Davis

Julian Dean

Joshua Dickin

Mandy Duncan

Greg Ebbs

Susan Eden

Donna Edmunds

Craig Emery

Brian Evans

Roger Evans

Adam Fejfer

Rhys Gratton

Andy Hall

Kate Halliday

Harry Hancock-Davies

Nick Hignett

Alan Holford

George Hollyhead

Ruth Houghton

Dawn Husemann

Peter Husemann

Benedict Jephcott

Robert Jones

Duncan Kerr

Christopher Lemon

Nigel Lumby

Brendan Mallon

Sarah Marston

David Minnery

Vicky Moore

Mark Morris

Alan Mosley

Malcolm Myles-Hook

Chris Naylor

James Owen

Mark Owen

Wendy Owen

Vivienne Parry

Ed Potter

Rosie Radford
Sharon Ritchie-Simmons
Carl Rowley
Charles Shackerley-Bennett
Colin Stanford
Jon Tandy

Colin Taylor
Dan Thomas
Teri Trickett
David Vasmer
Beverley Waite
David Walker

Sam Walmsley
Alison Williams
Rob Wilson

Your Committee Officer is:

Tim Ward Committee Officer

Tel: 01743 257713

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Pecuniary 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 (Pages 1 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 September 2025

4 Announcements

To receive such communications as the Chairman, Leader and Head of Paid Service may desire to lay before the Council.

5 Public Questions at Council, Cabinet and Committee Meetings (Pages 11 - 12)

Report of the Service Director Legal, Governance and Planning is attached

Contact Tim Collard Tel: 01743 252756

6 Public Questions

To receive any questions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification is 12.00 noon on Friday 5 December 2025

7 Questions from Members

To receive any questions from Members, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.2. Deadline for notification is 12.00 noon on Friday 5 December 2025

8 Auditors Annual Report

Report of the Executive Director, Resources is **to follow**

Contact: James Walton. Tel. 01743 258915

9 Improvement Plan (Pages 13 - 68)

Report of the Interim Chief Executive is attached

Contact; Tanya Miles Email: tanya.miles@shropshire.gov.uk

10 People Plan (Pages 69 - 112)

Report of the Executive Director Public Health is attached

Contact: Rachel Robinson Tel 01743 252003

11 Setting the Council Tax Taxbase for 2026/27 (Pages 113 - 142)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources is attached

Contact: James Walton. Tel. 01743 258915

12 Treasury Strategy 2025/26 Mid-Year Review (Pages 143 - 166)

Report of the Executive Director, Resources is attached

Contact: James Walton. Tel. 01743 258915

13 Children's Services Annual Report

Report of the Service Director – Children and Young People is **To Follow**

Contact: Sonya Miller Tel: 01743 254264

14 Appointment of Interim Chief Executive, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer (Pages 167 - 170)

Report of the Service Director Legal, Governance and Planning is attached

Contact Tim Collard Tel: 01743 252756

15 Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel members

Report of the Service Director Legal, Governance and Planning is **To Follow**

Contact Tim Collard Tel: 01743 252756

16 Changes to Committee Membership

Audit & Governance Committee

Councillor Greg Ebbs to replace Councillor Chris Naylor as a substitute member of the Audit and Governance Committee

17 Motions

The following motions have been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 16:

**a Motion received from Councillors Alex Wagner and Dan Thomas and supported by Councillors Duncan Kerr and Dawn Husemann
Enhancing Accessibility of Council Meetings**

This Council recognises the importance of ensuring that all elected members, regardless of employment status, are able to fully participate in the democratic process and contribute to the work of Shropshire Council.

All Scrutiny and Committee meetings are currently scheduled during standard working

hours. This timing can present barriers to engagement for members who work full-time or have other daytime commitments. To improve accessibility and inclusivity for all Members and the Public, this Council resolves to:

1. Move a selection of Scrutiny and other Committee meetings to a 6pm start time, with the aim of enabling greater participation from working-age members.
2. Request that Democratic Services continue to consult with Group Leaders and Committee Chairs to identify suitable meetings for evening scheduling.
3. Review the impact of this change after a twelve-month period from implementation, including feedback from members and officers, to assess its effectiveness and sustainability.

This Motion seeks to modernise our approach to member engagement and ensure that Shropshire Council remains representative and responsive to the needs of all its elected members.

b **Motion received from Councillor Brendan Mallon and supported by Councillors Dawn Husemann, Carl Rowley, Harry Hancock Davies and George Hollyhead**
Members of the Economy and Environment Committee were recently briefed on the proposed Sundorne Sports Village redevelopment. Some of us were disappointed to see that Pyrolysis technology has not been considered for the requirement to supply both bulk heating and electrical energy for the facility, seemingly an ideal solution for such an application.

Instead, a multi-million pound system of air source heat pumps and solar panels has been selected. This technology will somewhat mitigate reliance on the world's most expensive electricity grid but will still be highly dependent on that grid in low light and/or low temperature conditions. The production and supply chain for the solar panels in particular involves highly carbon-intensive production and transport from China, with a high risk of slave labour being involved. These panels are also uneconomical to recycle, with the attendant risk to the environment from end-of-life disposal.

By contrast, the Pyrolysis technology provides abundant heat and electricity on demand, is completely 'off-grid', is carbon negative and should repay its capital costs over time through the sales of biochar product and carbon credits, unlike the heat pumps and panels which are merely lower carbon and is still heavily grid-dependent. The equipment is easily recyclable at its end-of-life. The plants and their feedstock are both locally produced, supporting local employment and commerce. The Council is already heavily invested in this technology at the Ludlow site, as well as having made a substantial £500000 direct investment in manufacturer Biodynamic Carbon Ltd. This Council has already expressed robust support for this technology at a Full Council meeting, voting in additional funding to bring our total investment up to a considerable £3.3 million. If we are spending over £3 million of council taxpayers' money on this technology in Ludlow and have substantially bought into the manufacturer, then it should be a serious contender for the Sundorne application.

In order to support what would appear to be an economically and environmentally superior technology, as well as supporting local industry and demonstrating confidence in Shropshire Council's own existing direct investment in its use and production, we move that a full side-by-side comparison of the two systems be made, with the superior technology being selected for deployment on the Sundorne project. The comparison should consider the full life-cycle costs (including offset through biochar and carbon credit sales) and environmental impact of equipment procurement, replacement and disposal across the expected lifetime of the Sports Village, as well as comparing overall energy and CO2 budgets across that life-cycle.

Let's keep the Shropshire Pound in Shropshire.

18 Report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

To receive the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority **Report to Follow**

19 Exclusion of Press and Public

To resolve 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

20 Shirehall Strategic Review

Exempt report of the Head of Property & Development is **to Follow**

Contact Steve Law Tel 01743 251017

21 Chief Executive and Chief Officer 2025/26 Pay Award Options (Pages 171 - 176)

The exempt report of the HR & OD Manager is attached.

Contact: Sam Coillins-Lafferty Tel: 01743 252854



Committee and Date

Council

11 December 2025

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2025

**In The Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.00 am**

Responsible Officer: Ashley Kendrick

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

Present

Councillors Duncan Borrowman (Chairman), Heather Kidd (Leader), Gary Groves (Vice-Chair), Alex Wagner (Deputy Leader), Sho Abdul, Caroline Bagnall, Elizabeth Barker, Bernie Bentick, Ed Bird, Jeremy Blandford, Andy Boddington, Thomas Clayton, Susan Coleman, Rachel Connolly, Tom Dainty, Jamie Daniels, Rosemary Dartnall, David Davies, Pamela Davies, Andy Davis, Julian Dean, Joshua Dickin, Mandy Duncan, Greg Ebbs, Susan Eden, Donna Edmunds, Craig Emery, Brian Evans, Roger Evans, Adam Fejfer, Rhys Gratton, Andy Hall, Kate Halliday, Harry Hancock-Davies, Nick Hignett, Alan Holford, George Hollyhead, Ruth Houghton, Dawn Husemann, Peter Husemann, Benedict Jephcott, Robert Jones, Duncan Kerr, Christopher Lemon, Nigel Lumby, Sarah Marston, David Minnery, Vicky Moore, Mark Morris, Malcolm Myles-Hook, Chris Naylor, James Owen, Mark Owen, Wendy Owen, Vivienne Parry, Ed Potter, Rosie Radford, Carl Rowley, Charles Shackerley-Bennett, Colin Stanford, Jon Tandy, Dan Thomas, Teri Trickett, David Vasmer, Beverley Waite, David Walker, Sam Walmsley, Alison Williams and Rob Wilson

34 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Councillors Brendan Mallon, Alan Mosely, Sharon Ritchie-Simmons and Colin Taylor.

35 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

Councillors Heather Kidd, Ruth Houghton and Joshua Dickin declared an interest in item 11 – Bishops Castle Leisure- Approval for Decarbonisation and Pool Renovation Project. Councillors Kidd and Houghton would be leaving the room for the debate, and Councillor Dickin would be abstaining from the vote.

36 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2025, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

37 Announcements

The Leader announced that Tanya Miles would be acting as Interim Chief Executive and Rachel Robinson would be acting as Interim Deputy Chief Executive.

Chairman's Engagements

The Chairman referred Members to the list of official engagements carried out by himself and the Vice Chairman since the last meeting of the Council on 17th July 2025, which had been circulated at the meeting.

38 Public Questions

Petitions

The Chairman advised that a petition bearing more than 1,000 signatures had been received from Sian Powell, on behalf of the Friends of Cleobury Mortimer Sports Centre, requesting a debate under the Council's Petition Scheme. The petition urged the Council to:

"Prioritise funding, find sustainable financial solutions, and explore partnerships that can safeguard the future of Teme Leisure's offerings."

Ms Powell was given 5 minutes to open the debate and outline her case, which was briefly as follows:

- Cleobury Mortimer Sports Centre has been a vital community hub since 1985, which receives over 30,000 visits annually, supports 26 local sports clubs, and serves 590 members, acting as a key venue for health, connection, and opportunity in the town.
- It provides a safe, inclusive environment for physical activities that improve physical and mental health, including GP referrals for tailored exercise plans.
- The centre offers local employment, including part-time roles for young people, and supports youth engagement through sports
- The Friends of the Centre requested that the Council reconsider budget cuts, support fundraising efforts, and potentially underwrite costs to prevent closure, emphasizing that the centre is essential for sustaining community health and reducing long-term healthcare burdens

In response to the petition the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure, Councillor James Owen thanked the petitioner for submitting the petition and made the following points –

- Within the current budget which removed any subsidies for leisure facilities, there was no room to reinstate funding this year.
- Since the contract notice, local community members have actively sought ways to preserve the leisure centre, with council leaders engaging in discussions and

supporting alternative solutions, including learning from successful fundraising efforts like those in Bishop's Castle.

- As of the latest update, no formal confirmation had been received about extending the current operator's contract beyond December, though there is an indication they may seek to continue operations temporarily
- Council members had visited Cleobury Mortimer, engaged with fundraising groups, and committed to continuing negotiations and exploring all options to sustain leisure services until a broader contract can be established in 2027.

In closing the Portfolio Holder thanked the petitioner again and indicated that no further action would be taken and that the Council would continue to seek ways to maintain the service in negotiation with the Council and other third parties.

Public Questions

The Chairman advised that public questions had been received from Rev. Paul Cawthorne, Emma Bullard, Ron and Jane Berry, Frances Rickford, Susan Wedlock and John Palmer.

The full questions and responses can be found on [Public Questions - Council 25.9.25.pdf](#)

39 Questions from Members

The Chairman advised that the following questions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.

Question from Councillor Beverley Waite regarding increasing the size of car parking spaces. By way of supplementary question Councillor Waite asked that if a trial was possible, that Ludlow could be considered. The Portfolio Holder agreed to arrange a meeting between Councillor Waite and the relevant officer to discuss further.

Question from Councillor Sarah Marston regarding speed limits and road safety measures. There was no supplementary question.

Question from Councillor Harry Hancock-Davies regarding the collection of council tax and business rates. By way of supplementary question, Councillor Hancock-Davies sought confirmation that the Portfolio Holder would commit to reversing the staffing cuts made to the revenues and benefits team. The Portfolio Holder gave his assurance that he would have discussions with the appropriate officers at all levels to try and ensure that the situation on the debt collection for both council tax and the business rates is improved.

An urgent question had been received from Councillor Carl Rowley with regards to supporting St Martins School following the recent fire.

A copy of the questions and the responses provided are available from the web page for the meeting - [Member Questions - Council 25.9.25 with responses.pdf](#)

40 Corporate Peer Challenge Report and Response

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Members discussed the need for detailed consultation, realistic timelines, scrutiny involvement, and the importance of balancing planning, action, and internal controls to achieve sustainability.

RESOLVED:

Council

1. Endorsed the recommendations in the LGA CPC report (appendix 1), noted the immediate actions being taken, and the intention to present an action plan to address the recommendations being presented to 15 October 2025 Cabinet.
2. Recognised the relationship between the planned 12-to-18-month timescales for the Improvement Plan to achieve financial sustainability and the urgency to address the financial emergency.
3. Approved the draft terms of reference for the Improvement and Assurance Board (appendix 2) and delegated the finalisation of arrangements including governance, to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader.
4. To work across political parties to identify, support and pursue options that will achieve the CPC recommendations and financial sustainability for the council and the delivery of the council's priorities and outcomes for Shropshire communities in years to come.

41 A New Direction for Shropshire

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Heather Kidd and seconded by Councillor Alex Wagner, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities that the report and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Members acknowledged the need for measurable objectives, resource implications for town and parish councils, and the importance of economic and contract strategies.

RESOLVED:

Council:

1. Considered and endorsed the strategic direction and priorities outlined in the attached document (Appendix A) with a view to agreeing an aligned way forward for the Council.
2. Agreed that detailed delivery plans are created at a Portfolio Holder level, subject to the consideration under the Scrutiny process, with Portfolio Holders reporting back to Council on a regular basis on the progress being made.

42 SEND and AP Strategy and Outcomes Framework

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Hall, Portfolio Holder for Children and Education and seconded by Councillor Neil Bentley that the report of the Director of Children's Services and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Members acknowledged that there is a recognized national need to improve SEND provision, and while local improvements have been made, further progress was needed. It was noted that the strategy will be scrutinised in six months to assess progress and identify areas for improvement.

RESOLVED:

Council

1. Considered and approved the final draft SEND and AP Strategy 2025 – 2029
2. Adopted the Outcomes Framework as a 'live working document', noting the ambitions to focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and families.
3. Noted that Cabinet will receive an update in 6 months on the development of the implementation plans and refinement of the multi-agency workstreams to deliver the strategy. This should also include a progress update with respect to the development of measurable outcomes and further refinement of the Outcomes Framework.

43 Children's Social Care Ofsted Report and Next Steps

It was proposed by Councillor Ruth Houghton, Portfolio Holder for Social Care and seconded by Councillor Sarah Marston that the report of the Director of Children's Services and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Members acknowledged the work of the Children's Improvement Board, staff, and previous portfolio holders, and were urged to get involved with the Corporate Parenting Panel as it was extremely rewarding.

RESOLVED:

Council:

1. Acknowledged this outstanding achievement and the positive impact on the lives of children, young people and families in Shropshire.
2. Acknowledged the Council-wide commitment to sustaining and embedding this outstanding achievement, at the same time recognising the preventative benefits that doing so will bring to children, young people and families

44 Bishop's Castle Leisure – Approval for Decarbonisation and Pool Renovation Project

It was proposed by Councillor James Owen, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure and seconded by Councillor Jeremy Blandford that the report of the Service Director for Commissioning and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Members noted that the Friends of SPARC had raised £500,000 locally and secured £2.5 million in government grants for facility improvements, with the aim of reducing energy and maintenance costs and ensuring long-term sustainability.

The Portfolio Holder clarified that the project is funded through capital, not revenue, and aligns with the administration's aim to protect services through community partnership and use of available funds.

RESOLVED:

Council:

1. Approved the Bishop's Castle Pool Refurbishment Project for inclusion in the Capital Programme.
2. Approved the Bishop's Castle Decarbonisation Project for inclusion in the Capital Programme.
3. Delegated authority to the Service Director for Commissioning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure to procure, negotiate and agree the terms of any agreements and contracts necessary and to proceed with the delivery of both projects.

45 Appointment to Committees

It was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Duncan Borrowman, and seconded by the Vice Chairman, Councillor Gary Groves, that the amendments to committee membership as set out in the agenda papers be agreed. In addition, members were notified of an additional amendment to the Southern Planning Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the amendments to committee membership as set out in the agenda papers be agreed, together with the addition of Councillor Carl Rowley replacing Councillor Dawn Husemann as a substitute member of the Southern Planning Committee.

46 Motions

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Duncan Kerr and supported by the Green and Independent Group:

Last year Carers UK launched a policy report and a national campaign to establishing that caring should be a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act saying

“Carers have given us strong evidence that they do not feel that there is a level playing field. They feel invisible, overlooked, and discriminated against. When applying for jobs, equality monitoring forms do not ask whether someone has unpaid caring responsibilities. There is no direct requirement for simple reasonable adjustments for carers in the workplace. Carers say that this would make a difference”.

This Council has already shown its willingness to help those who suffer disadvantage and discrimination by its unanimous decision to treat care-leavers as having a protected characteristic under this Act and I know this has meant a lot to the children that we have parental responsibility for. Carers clearly feel they suffer discriminations and inequality that limits their role. Empowering them by giving them this protection would not only improve the quality of life for the people they care for but also reduce demands on Social care.

We therefore call on the Council to:

1. Support the campaign by Carers UK to make having caring responsibilities a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act and
2. To treat carers in Shropshire as though they had a protected characteristic.

RESOLVED:

That the Council:

1. Supports the campaign by Carers UK to make having caring responsibilities a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act and
2. Treats carers in Shropshire as though they had a protected characteristic.

Motion received from Councillor Rosemary Dartnall and supported by the Labour Group

The financial crisis that has been rumbling forwards for a number years has reached an inevitable crunch point. Unless urgent action is taken to avert a section 114 notice, Shropshire Council will not be able to balance its budget this financial year. If we cannot pull back from the brink, we are now looking at the very real prospect of government commissioners running the council.

This outcome is not in the public interest and I'm sure none of us want it to happen.

The basic member allowance is due to increase by 3.2% - to be back-dated to either 1 April or 5 May, in the October payroll. **We propose the increase for all councillors is cancelled immediately.**

Allowing for the addition of basic allowance multipliers for portfolio holders and councillors with certain roles, this will save £44,500 in the current financial year and impact positively on coming years. While a relatively minor financial contribution in terms of the overall position, it equates to 5% of the current shortfall and represents a small but important step in the right direction.

Unanimous agreement to this motion would demonstrate leadership and make a strong statement to the public and to Shropshire Council staff, who have endured several years of uncertainty about their jobs.

Please vote with us to cancel the proposed member increase with immediate effect.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion failed.

Motion received from Councillor Harry Hancock-Davies and supported by the Reform UK Group

Motion: Establishment of a Fraud Investigation Team

Currently, Shropshire Council has no dedicated fraud investigation team. As a result, the authority faces a significant risk of under-detecting and under-reporting fraud. This may lead to fraudulent claims or practices going unchallenged, minimal recovery of public funds, and a growing perception that fraud within Shropshire is unlikely to be detected. This may exacerbate financial pressures and erode public confidence in the Council's ability to safeguard resources.

This Council notes with concern the findings of the 2023 report by Crowe, Peters & Peters, and the University of Plymouth, which estimate that annual losses to the UK's public sector amount to £50.2 billion. Of this, £8.8 billion (excluding benefits) is attributed to fraud within Local Authorities. The largest risks are identified in procurement (£5bn), housing tenancy fraud (£2bn), and payroll fraud (£1.2bn). Additionally, benefit-related fraud accounts for £2.9bn, including Housing Benefit fraud (£700m) and Council Tax Reduction fraud (£60m).

This Council believes:

That taking proactive steps to prevent, detect, and address fraud is essential to protecting public funds, ensuring fairness, and maintaining trust within local government.

That a dedicated fraud team, whether internally managed or externally contracted—subject to a feasibility assessment—can provide a robust structure for risk-based investigation, prevention, and enforcement while positively contributing to the Council's financial resilience.

This Council notes:

The support provided to local authorities by the Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally strategy, which sets out a coordinated national framework supported by the Public Sector Fraud Authority (PSFA) and the National Audit Office (NAO).

The effectiveness of focused fraud investigation and detection, as evidenced by the annual reports of the National Fraud Initiative.

That whilst the exceptional recovery ratios achieved in some large urban areas may not be matched in Shropshire, evidence from comparable councils suggests that even modest detection and recovery levels can result in net savings exceeding operational costs.

This Council recognises that every pound lost to fraud is a pound not being invested in our communities, public services, and adult social care. Fraud directly impacts the Council's ability to provide services to those in genuine need and adds stress to already stretched finances.

That from the 1 September 2025, the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 introduces a new corporate offence of failure to prevent fraud. This legislation places a duty on organisations to implement reasonable fraud prevention measures and holds them criminally liable for fraudulent acts committed by employees or agents

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Establish a permanently dedicated and resourced Fraud Investigation Team, tasked with the detection, investigation, and recovery of monies lost through fraudulent activity, in compliance with the Council's governance and budgetary procedures.
2. Ensure the Team works closely with other relevant Council departments—such as procurement and Revenues & Benefits to maximise recovery and prevention efforts.
3. Where appropriate, pursue prosecutions to deliver a strong deterrent effect, ensuring that successful cases taken through the courts are publicised through the media to maximise deterrence, and that all work is carried out fully within the legislative framework available.
4. Develop partnerships with external agencies including the Police, HMRC, DWP, and other relevant organisations to strengthen investigations, prosecutions, and the recovery of proceeds of crime.
5. Implement a timeline for the establishment and review of the Fraud Investigation Team, with periodic reporting to Full Council or the Audit Committee.

The motion was ruled out of order due to budget implications and was referred, following a vote to the Audit and Governance Committee for further consideration.

47 Report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

It was proposed by Councillor David Minnery that the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority be received and noted.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority be noted.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:



Committee and Date
Council
11 December 2025

Item

Public



Public Questions at Council, Cabinet and Committee Meetings

Responsible Officer:	Tim Collard, Service Director Legal, Governance and Planning	
email:	Tim.collard@shropshire.gov.uk	
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Councillor Heather Kidd, Leader	

1. Synopsis

This report sets out a proposed change to the public question time arrangements in the Council Procedure Rules. The change will allow members of the public who have registered to ask a question at a Council, Cabinet or committee meeting to also ask a supplementary question once they have received their response.

2. Executive Summary

Currently only Members may ask a supplementary question after receiving a response to a question they have submitted for a committee meeting. The proposed change will rectify this anomaly and support the Administration's desire for genuine engagement and openness, public participation, and more transparent governance.

3. Recommendations

To add an additional paragraph to section 14.1 of the Council Procedure Rules stating

“That a member of the public asking a question under Rule 14.1 may ask one supplementary question without notice of the Member to whom the first question was asked. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. Any supplementary question which cannot be dealt with during the time allotted for Public Questions will be dealt with by a written answer”

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

Risk of extending the duration of a meeting, or opening debate too widely within a limited time period is considered to be more than offset by the positive step of allowing the public to respond to an answer provided at a meeting.

5. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications resulting from this change.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

There are no climate change implications in making this change.

7. Background

There is an anomaly within the Council Procedure Rules between Member and Public Questions in that only Members have the right to ask a supplementary question, once they have received a response to their original question.

It is the Administration's view that members of the public should also have the right to ask a supplementary question, to allow more genuine engagement and openness and encourage public participation.

It is therefore proposed to amend the Council's Procedure Rules to take account of this change and update the information available to the public on asking questions at Committee Meetings (available [here](#))

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Shropshire Council Constitution Part 4 – [Council Procedure Rules](#)

Local Member: *All*



Committee and Date

Transformation and Improvement OSC 1 December 2025

Cabinet 3 December 2025

Council 11 December 2025

Item

Public



Shropshire Council Improvement Plan

Responsible Officer:	Tanya Miles – Interim Chief Executive	
email:	tanya.miles@shropshire.gov.uk	
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Heather Kidd	

Synopsis

Shropshire Council needs to address its serious financial position with urgency. The Improvement Plan sets out how the Council is going to ensure it has stable and sustainable finances, a clear purpose and priorities to work to, and staff who are enabled to excel, including the immediate response to the Financial Emergency.

Executive Summary

2.1 In July 2025 the Local Government Association (LGA) carried out a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) at the invitation of the Council. The peer challenge identified 10 recommendations and several additional opportunities for the council to address and recognised the challenging financial position of the council. The recommendations, which were all accepted, included establishing an Improvement Board with an independent chair. In addition, during 2025 the council has received other external feedback including reports from Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) for Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care, rating these services as Outstanding and Good respectively, and the annual External Auditors letter (reported to the 26 September 2025 Audit and Governance Committee) and the

External Auditors Annual Report (reported to the 27 November 2025 Audit and Governance Committee). Additionally, the Council declared a Financial Emergency at 10 September 2025 Cabinet.

- 2.2 In response to this external feedback and the declaration of the Financial Emergency, the Council has taken immediate action to address the issues raised. This has included an action plan responding to the recommendations from the CPC (reported to Cabinet on the 15 October 2025), setting up the Improvement Board, which had its first meeting on Monday 10 November, appointing an independent chair, and developing the Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 1. The CPC action plan has been incorporated into the Improvement Plan. It is intended that this wider Improvement Plan, as the first part of the Council's Strategic Plan, will be presented to Council in December 2025. The council has received significant support from the Local Government Association to contribute to the improvement journey.
- 2.3 This paper presents the draft Improvement Plan (appendix 1) for consideration, feedback and confirmation before being presented to Council on 11 December. The Plan is not a detailed delivery plan. It is designed to be a single framework and plan for the Council's improvement activity. In doing so it sets out the governance and support arrangements that will ensure that the council delivers the plan, and brings together existing and new activity and actions that will enable strong foundations that will enable the council to deliver its priorities and outcomes for Shropshire communities.
- 2.4 The Plan is structured around three aims which together will support the Council to make best use of the resource it has available to it to better deliver, enable, and influence for Shropshire and its residents by:
- Having clear priorities and purpose
 - Being financially stable and sustainable
 - Supporting and enabling our workforce to excel

Each aim initially has three priority programmes of action (see paragraph 7.2) Some of this action is a continuation of existing work and some activity is new. As a single overarching plan, it makes the links to a range of strategies and plans that contribute to realising the aims, including a new People Plan which will include much of the activity that helps us to be a Council that improves how we support and enable our workforce to deliver. That Plan is also presented to Cabinet (03/12/25) for consideration. There are also key elements of the financial stability activity on that will be presented to Cabinet and Council over the coming months including the Capital Strategy, draft Financial Strategy, Fees and Charges and Treasury Management Strategy.

- 2.5 The Improvement Plan has been developed with a clear eye on the future council. The Council has previously considered how it needs to adopt new ways of working to deliver its priorities while being a financially sustainable organisation. Reports to Council in July 2024 and February 2025 set out thinking on a new operating model. Together with the 'New Direction' report agreed at Council in September 2025, they suggest several key principles that should guide how the Council will operate and improve. The Improvement Plan draws on those to ensure that improvement activity does not simply focus on addressing the immediate issues but has a strong

focus on enabling the council to deliver the outcomes and services it has priorities in the way that it has identified it want to work.

2.6 The Plan has been developed with engagement with staff at all levels and with Members. There have been weekly updates to the Senior Leadership Forum, six briefing sessions during the first week of November for all staff, an online form for staff to share thoughts and feedback, regular development conversations with Leadership Board, introductory meetings with all Group Leaders, weekly updates with the Leader and Deputy Leader, two briefings for the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and an all member briefing. Throughout these briefings, feedback has been taken, and questions asked and responded to. A key message has been that there will more engagement and involvement of staff in particular, and Members in the implementation of the Plan, the development of the Corporate Plan, and for all strategies and plans that are developed going forward.

2.7 As highlighted in previous reports to 25 September Council and 15 October Cabinet on the CPC and improvement work, the Improvement Plan is part of a suite of organisation wide strategic plans which together form the Shropshire Plan. The suite also includes the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which will be agreed at Council in February 2026, the Corporate Plan which has started in its preparation and will be further developed in the new year for agreement at Council in May 2026, and the Shropshire 2050 Partnership Plan, which will set out a more outward focus about the place and how the council will work with others to realise shared outcomes.

Recommendations

T&I OSC are asked to:

- 3.1 Consider the draft Improvement Plan (Appendix 1)
- 3.2 Provide observations and any recommendations through a verbal report by the Chair to Cabinet at their meeting on the 3 December 2025
- 3.3 Identify how and where the committee can and will add value to the delivery of the Improvement Plan

Cabinet are asked to:

- 3.1 Review, comment on, and recommend the draft Improvement Plan (Appendix 1) to Council.
- 3.2 Recommend to Council the governance arrangements set out in the Plan.
- 3.3 Recommend to Council that the capacity and resources to support the delivery of transformation required through this plan will be aligned to the MTFS.

Council are asked to:

- 3.1 Consider and agree the draft Improvement Plan (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 Agree the governance arrangements set out in the Plan.
- 3.3 Agree that the capacity and resources to support the delivery of transformation required through this plan will be aligned to the MTFS.

Report

Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 The Council needs to improve and demonstrate to residents, partners, and the Government that it is doing so with urgency. It has a serious financial position to address and needs to do this by both pursuing the opportunities to do this and managing and mitigating the risks to achieving them. Failure to do so could result in Government intervention. The Improvement Plan has been developed with a clear view of what authorities that have been subject to intervention have been required to do and sets out how the Council will deliver the improvements it needs to make over the next 12 to 18 months to the end of March 2027.
- 4.2 The following set out the risks to achieving the improvement plan at this current point in time. Additional and amended risks will be identified and managed as they arise as the Plan is implemented. The Council's Strategic risks are also currently being reviewed which includes how they align to the requirements of the Improvement Plan and the Improvement Board.

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
Capacity and pace of delivery - Failure to deliver the improvement plan in a timely and effective manner due to capacity constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive and robust view of the resourcing requirements to deliver the plan as delivery arrangements are confirmed by responsible lead senior officers, with reprioritisation and allocation taking place. • Clear and consistent leadership setting out the direction, pace, outcomes and expectations of the change required. • Governance and delivery arrangements that remove siloed working • Accountability and responsibility clearly articulated and demonstrated, including through progress and impact reporting
Resourcing the plan - Inability to reallocate and invest in functions to support the delivery of the plan will lead to difficulties in delivering the improvement plan	<p>The delivery approach for the Improvement Plan will set out the strategic framework which improvement activity will be delivered within, bringing together the Financial Stability Plan and the Sustainability Strategy, with the MTFS.</p> <p>A new Corporate Plan is being developed and this will take the priorities of the council, alongside the improvement plan and the financial strategy. Specifying and negotiating with MHCLG the amount and use of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) to deliver financial stability through the Improvement Plan and financial sustainability in the medium to longer term.</p>
Understanding and perception of change - Inability to maintain stakeholder confidence leading to reduced support for the improvement plan	Clear and timely internal and external communications and engagement that describes the process the Council is going through with open and honest descriptions of current progress while setting out the rationale for change and where the council is aiming to be in the future.

Managing interdependencies across the plan - Failure to manage interdependencies across the improvement plan leading to disruption, duplication or failure in delivering the improvement plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for direct communications between Strategic Accountable Officer (SAOs) responsible for the programmes of action has been identified early. • Interdependencies between the programmes have been identified and shared. • Changes in the performance or scope of change programmes will be communicated via the proposed governance structure. • Clear leadership will set out the aims and priorities of the change required. • Strengthened Corporate Programme Management Office (CPMO)
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Financial Implications

- 5.1 Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands and a financial emergency was declared by Cabinet on 10 September 2025. The overall financial position of the Council is set out in the monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. Significant management action has been instigated at all levels of the Council reducing spend to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all reports to Members 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. All non-essential spend will be stopped and all essential spend challenged. These actions may involve (this is not exhaustive):
- scaling down initiatives,
 - changing the scope of activities,
 - delaying implementation of agreed plans, or
 - extending delivery timescales.
- 5.2 The initial costs associated with the development of the Improvement Board and the creation of an Improvement Plan have been funded by contributions from LGA or managed within existing resources.
- 5.3 The calculation and confirmation of the resources required to implement the Improvement Plan and what is required to realise financial sustainability into the future is taking place. Delivering the plan will require the council to reprioritise resources to achieve the necessary change and include identifying where investment will be needed. The council has written to the government in relation to requesting Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) for the remainder of 2025/26, and for the coming years, which will enable this. This investment will be essential in enabling the council to develop and implement changes to achieve sustainable models of working and service delivery of achieve the outcomes within the available finances.
- 5.4 The financial implications of the Improvement Plan will be set out as accurately as possible in early December to inform the EFS application to MHCLG. The detailed

position will ultimately be reflected in the Financial Strategy due to be approved by Council in February 2026.

Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 Whilst this report and the Improvement Plan do not present options and recommendations that directly impact on climate change, the decisions that need to be taken and the actions that will need to take place to deliver financial sustainability and the priorities and outcomes of the council are likely to have impacts.
- 6.2 Opportunities to decarbonise the provision of services and increase energy efficiency of council assets may require some capital investment but will realise financial benefits e.g. through reducing energy usage, or through the generation of energy on council assets that either bring costs down or can generate income.
- 6.3 Climate change appraisals will need to be undertaken as appropriate for each project and approach that is developed to ensure that opportunities are identified and pursued, and that any 'invest to save' opportunities are investigated and fully evidenced to ensure that these can be taken into account in decision making.

Background

- 7.1 The Improvement Plan sets out how Shropshire Council will improve, ensuring it is a 'best value' authority that that is efficient and cost-effective and delivers, enables and influences for Shropshire and its residents. Delivering the improvement plan will provide assurance to residents, Members, staff, and partners that the council is improving how it operates and performs.
- 7.2 The Improvement Plan is not a detailed delivery plan. It acts as an overarching framework for council improvement activity, which are aligned to three aims. The priorities and initial programmes of action in the plan sit beneath these three aims and provide the basis of improvement for the next 18 months, up to the end of March 2027. Although the aims and programmes are set out in a table (see below), there is no hierarchy or sequencing behind where they are located, as they should be seen as interdependent elements of the Plan. They provide a basis for governance and performance reporting. The programmes vary in size, scale and complexity, and not all have been fully developed.

Aim	Priority activity/project/programme
A council that is financially stable and sustainable (Pounds)	Programme 1: Financial Stability
	Programme 2: Financial Sustainability Strategy
	Programme 3: Strengthening financial management policy & practice
A Council that has clear priorities and purpose (Priorities)	Programme 4: Corporate Plan 2026-30
	Programme 5: Future Council – including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling partnerships and communities Place shaping role Operating principles and ways of working
	Programme 6: Review and realignment of the transformation programme

A council that supports and enables our workforce to excel (People)	Programme 7: People Plan – including:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee engagement and enrolment New ways of working – services and support staff
	Programme 8: Getting the basics right (strengthening corporate governance and compliance)
	Programme 9: Digital programme

- 7.3 The Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) recommended that the council took action to strengthen corporate governance and compliance, which is one of the programmes of action in the improvement plan (Programme 8 in the table above).
- 7.4 The plan also sets out the arrangements by the council to ensure the delivery of the plan to achieve the three aims. This includes the role of the functions that will provide support to the delivery, as well as confirming the senior officer roles and Portfolio Holders who will be accountable and responsible. It also shares the role of the Improvement Board and how it fits with the council's political governance structures (Council, Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and the Audit and Governance Committee).
- 7.5 The aims in the plan will last beyond this timeframe and should form the basis of the council's continuous improvement. The approaches to how they are delivered will need to adjust to changing requirements and the environment the council is operating in.
- 7.6 The Plan needs to have a clear eye on the future way that the council is going to work and what it is prioritising. It needs to frame the improvement that will be made against this to ensure that the changes are sustainable and don't just address the immediate issues. As part of this the operating principles have been set out in the improvement plan, consolidating what has been previously agreed around the future way of working. These are set out below:

Principle	What it means
Agility and Adaptability	We will take an agile and adaptable approach, focussing on what works best, not on a fixed idealistic approach to our role. Some service areas may need to stop, some brought in-house, some delivered in partnership, and some delivered through contract.
Early Intervention and Prevention	We will focus on prevention across all areas of our work. This means resolving issues as early as possible, improving compliance, and reducing the cost of failure. By working with partners and communities, we will make sure people can access the right support at the right time—helping prevent problems before they escalate.
Working with others in Partnership	We will work in genuine partnership at every level to improve services for Shropshire residents. This means enabling and empowering Town and Parish Councils, voluntary groups, and communities to take ownership of local priorities to help where we can no longer deliver key services alone.
Digitally Enabling and Automation	We will make use of new technology and wherever possible and appropriate, will use it to deliver services efficiently and effectively,

	reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and enabling more automation and self-service. Our approach is digital by choice.
Resident and Customer Focus	We will put customers (residents, businesses or communities) first in everything we do so that they receive the right services at the right time and enable a more efficient way of interacting and engaging with our customers and communities.
Data, Insight and Demand Management	We will use data to get a better understanding of current and future demand for services and support and use insight and evidence from stakeholders to inform our decision making.

- 7.7 The plan responds to the improvement needs established through events and external reports and recommendations. These include the council announcing a financial emergency at Cabinet on the 10 September 2025, the report and recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in July 2025 and reported to Council 25 September 2025, recent CQC and Ofsted inspections (rated Good and Outstanding respectively), the External Auditors Letter reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on 26 September 2025 and the Annual Report of the External Auditor (Audit and Governance Committee 27 November 2025), and the Best Value duty and standards for Local Authorities.
- 7.8 Immediate action has been taken to respond to the financial emergency which includes spend control measures and increased monitoring. The draft Medium-term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was presented to Cabinet on the 15 October, and an action plan responding to the recommendations from the LGA Peer Challenge was reported to the same meeting. These actions have been incorporated into the Improvement Plan.
- 7.9 In addition to responding to these different sources of external feedback, the Improvement Plan consolidates the different improvement focused activity of the council into a single plan. This includes programmes and actions to deliver the People Plan, Capital Strategy, Fees and Charges Policy, Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy, and Financial Strategy. Having one improvement plan that brings all relevant improvement actions into a single plan to help ensure consistency, remove duplication, alignment of activity and enable the council to be efficient, economic, and effective. This will be followed by the development of the corporate plan building on these and the New Directions for Shropshire paper presented to council on the 25 September 2025.
- 7.10 The development of the plan has been informed by engagement with staff and the Members. There were six engagement sessions for staff carried out during early November where the three Improvement Plan aims and the then draft priority programme areas were tested and feedback sought. These sessions were a mix of online and face to face sessions attended by staff across different levels. The Leadership Board and the Senior Leaders Forum have been engaged and involved in the Plan development at least weekly. There has also been strong engagement with Members including weekly updates with the Leader and Deputy Leader, discussions with Cabinet, introductory meetings with Group Leaders, an all-Member briefing, and briefings for the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.11 The following table shares the overall structure of the improvement plan and provides brief descriptions of what each section covers.

Section	Purpose
1. Introduction	This section explains the purpose of the Plan and sets out the context for the Council's improvement. It is part of the council's Shropshire Plan strategic plan suite with the Corporate Plan 2026-2030, the Shropshire 2050 Partnership Plan, and the MTFS 2026/27-2030/31. The Improvement Plan sets out how the council will be strengthened. It can be considered to be the first chapter of the strategic plan, setting out the organisational health priorities.
2. Our Future Council	This section summarises how the Council will need to change how it looks, feels and operates so that improvement is focused on the future council – picking up the key principles and ways of working set out in previous reports agreed at Council on the future operating model and more recently the New Direction paper that was presented to Council on the 25 September 2025.
3. Our Improvement Aims and Priorities	This section sets out our overall aims and priorities for improvement, and the outcomes and benefits we are looking to achieve. It provides the structure used to organise our improvement activities.
4. Making sure we deliver	This section provides a summary of the arrangements being developed and strengthened to support and enable the delivery of the Plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance arrangements that provides robust programme management, monitoring and assurance reporting • Capacity and resources to support the delivery of transformation • Communications and engagement to support the development and delivery of the Plan and its programmes of action
Appendix 1: Improvement activity – priority programme summaries	Provides a summary of the key activity and milestones for each of the priority programmes of action
Appendix 2: Risks	Provides a list of the key risks to delivery of the Improvement Plan
Appendix 3: Key Performance Indicators	Lists the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and measures we are considering to demonstrate progress towards the overall aims and realisation of the intended benefits and outcomes.
Appendix 4: Mapping improvement activity to external recommendations	Lists key improvement plan aims and programmes against the external improvement focused recommendations the council has received

7.12 Enabling the delivery of the Improvement Plan is a key consideration for the council. This will require some current areas of work to be reduced or paused whilst others are accelerated and introduced. This will mean that resources, both financial and employee, will need to be reprioritised and refocused at as early a stage as possible starting in December 2025, and that agreement from Government for the council to

access funding via Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) will be required. EFS will bridge any current gaps and help close future funding gaps related to the Council being able to deliver the change at pace that is needed to become a financially sustainable organisation able to deliver its responsibilities, priorities and outcomes. There will also be the need and opportunity for staff to be involved and engaged in the implementation of the Plan, helping to develop how the aims are put into action and the Council being stable and sustainable.

Conclusions

- 8.1 The Improvement Plan provides the overarching and coherent framework of the council's improvement work to March 2027, being a single plan that consolidates plans, strategies and actions.
- 8.2 The Improvement Plan aims are designed to be relevant and appropriate into the medium and longer term, beyond the timeframe of the plan, and provide the structure for continuous improvement by the council. This plan is being developed alongside the MTFS and will help the council be financially stable and sustainable and ensure that staff are enabled to move the council forward for Shropshire communities.
- 8.3 Successfully delivering the improvement plan will give the council a strong platform to deliver the priorities and outcomes that have been articulated in the New Direction for Shropshire paper presented to 25 September 2025 Council that and will inform the Corporate Plan 2026-2030 and the Shropshire 2050 Partnership Plan.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Q1 Financial Monitoring Report – 17 September Cabinet (check whether P4 report)
CPC Report – 25 September 2025 Council
CPC Action Plan – 15 October 2025 Cabinet
Draft Financial Strategy – 15 October 2025 Cabinet

Local Member: All

Appendices [Please list the titles of Appendices]

Appendix 1 – Draft Shropshire Council Improvement Plan

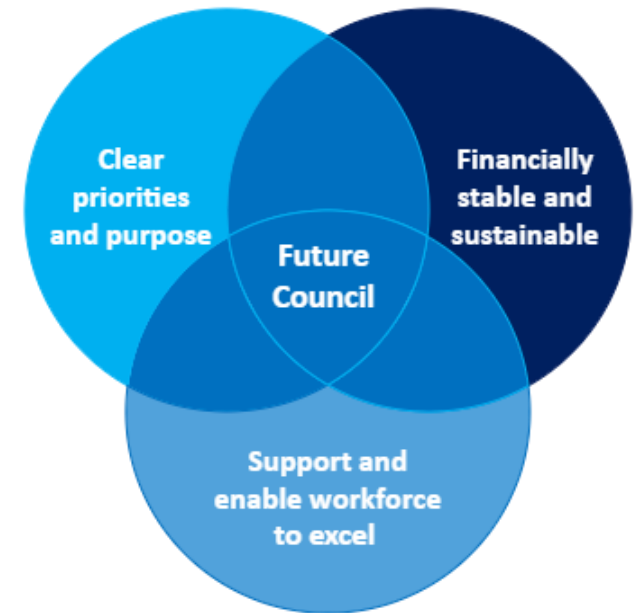
Draft for consideration
by Cabinet 03/12/25

Improvement Plan

Our Plan to become a financially sustainable council with clear priorities and a high performing workforce for the benefit of Shropshire and its residents

November 2025

Draft



The Council needs to improve. And we need to demonstrate to our residents, partners, and the Government that we are doing so with urgency.

To deliver, enable and influence for the county, the Council needs to quickly get better at managing its finances, be clearer on its priorities, and continue to support our workforce to excel. This Plan sets out how we will do that.

It shows our commitment to address immediate challenges, while ensuring a focus on the future and how the Council will need to look, feel, and operate to best serve the needs of the county and its residents, and being aware of changes in national policy.

We have a serious financial position to address. There is an immediate focus on that. But improvement is not just about fixing problems; it is about creating opportunities. Through this Plan, we will also strengthen our culture, invest in our people, and embed practices that drive continuous improvement. In doing so we will be better equipped to deliver our commitments to residents.

Our ambition is to be a council that is modern, efficient and sustainable —one that operates effectively, works in partnership, stays focused on residents, and is clear on its role and purpose. This Plan provides the framework for achieving that ambition. It outlines the priorities we will focus on, the changes we need to make, and the governance and assurance arrangements that will keep us on track.

We will measure progress transparently, manage risks proactively, and ensure resources are aligned to deliver the outcomes our communities need and expect. An Improvement Board, supported by the Local Government Association (LGA), will provide expert peer challenge and support, while holding us to account for delivery of the Plan.

Delivering the Plan will be a collective effort. Success will depend on collaboration across teams and with partners, strong leadership, and a shared determination to make a positive difference. Together we will build a council that is not only better than today but ready for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

Sitting alongside a new Corporate Plan 2026-30, Shropshire 2050 Plan, and Medium-Term Financial Strategy, it forms part of our overall Shropshire Plan that sets out the strategic priorities and purpose of the Council, and the improvement and resources needed to achieve those.

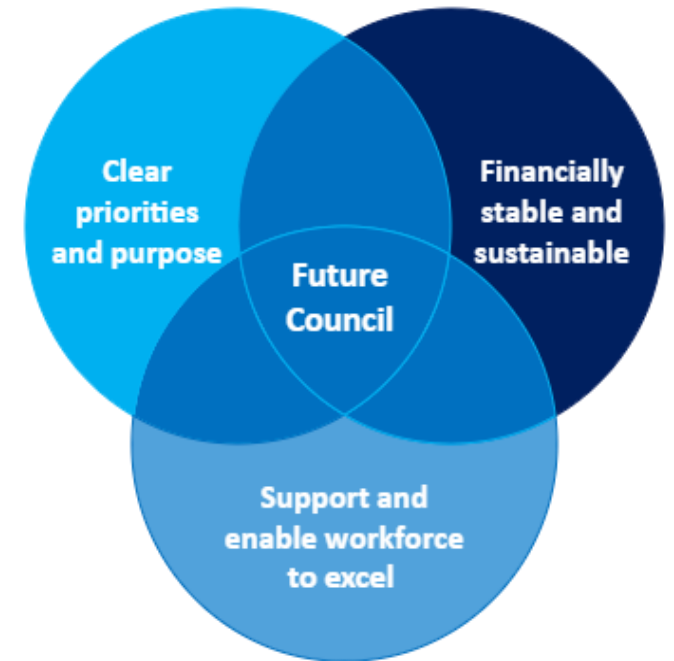
Councillor Heather Kidd
Leader of Shropshire Council

Tanya Miles
Interim Chief Executive, Shropshire Council

Section	Purpose	Page
1. Introduction	This section explains the purpose of the Plan, sets out the context for the Council’s improvement, and the relationship between this Plan and other strategic documents such as the Corporate Plan.	4
2. Our Future Council	This section summarises how the Council continues to change how it looks, feels and operates, so that improvement is focused on the future council and context as well as responding to current challenges and issues.	9
3. Our Improvement Aims and Priorities	This section sets out our overall aims and priorities for improvement, and the outcomes and benefits we are looking to achieve. It provides the structure used to organise our improvement activities, governance and reporting.	13
Page 25 Making sure we deliver: Governance & Assurance Enabling & Supporting Engagement and Communications	This section provides a summary of the arrangements that provide assurance we are delivering the Plan. It sets out how the Council will support the delivery of the Plan and summarises the engagement and communications that has helped to shape the Plan’s development and delivery.	19
Appendix 1: Improvement activity – priority programme summaries	Provides a summary of the key activity for each of the improvement priorities including key milestones and the accountable and responsible officers.	24
Appendix 2: Risks	Summarises the key risks to delivery of the Improvement Plan, and how they will be mitigated.	35
Appendix 3: Key Performance Indicators	Lists indicative Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and measures that will be used to demonstrate progress towards the overall Improvement Plan aims.	37
Appendix 4: Mapping improvement activity to external recommendations	Lists the improvement aims and programmes against the external recommendations and feedback the Council has received.	39
Appendix 5: Glossary of Terms	A list of key words or phrases and their definitions.	43

Section 1

Introduction



Purpose of this Plan

This Improvement Plan sets out how Shropshire Council will improve. Its aim is to equip the Council to be a 'best value' authority that delivers, enables, and influences for Shropshire and its residents by:

- **Being financially stable and sustainable**
- **Having clear priorities and purpose**
- **Supporting and enabling our workforce to excel**

The Plan is not a detailed delivery plan. It is a document that provides an overarching framework for our improvement activity. It sets out the aims and priorities that we will address the immediate challenges we face, while we work towards longer term change.

Delivering the priorities in the Improvement Plan will provide assurance to residents, councillors, officers, and partners that we are improving how we operate and perform so that we deliver, enable, and influence outcomes for the county and its residents in the most effective, efficient and economical way.

The priority programmes of action referred to in the Plan, provide the basis for our improvement over the next 18 months. The aims will remain as the overall ambitions for our continuous improvement. But the priorities we focus on to achieve them will evolve over time to reflect progress and respond to changing circumstances, policy direction, and pressures.

The need for change

The Improvement Plan has been developed as a response to several events, external reports and recommendations:

- A Financial emergency was declared by the Cabinet on 10th September 2025, after monitoring revealed a significant forecasted year-end overspend that cannot be mitigated by the Council's current resources. Immediate action is required, and a plan to achieve financial stability and sustainability beyond that is needed.
- A Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge delivered in July 2025, and reported to Full Council on 25th September 2025, provided observations and recommendations for improvement, including addressing the financial position and other areas of how the Council operates.
- An External Auditor letter and subsequent Statutory Recommendation 2025 identified that the Council must take steps to mitigate the forecasted end of year overspend and subsequent impacts, review service delivery, improve robustness of savings plans and prevent reliance on Exceptional Financial Support.
- External inspections carried out by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for Adult Social Care - rated as 'Good' (Feb 2025), and Ofsted for Children's Social Care rated as 'Outstanding' (August 2025). Both inspections identified improvement opportunities and priorities.

- Best Value Duty and Standards. The Statutory Guidance for Best Value Authorities provides the characteristics of a well-functioning authority. We know there are areas to improve on before we can confidently demonstrate excellence against all characteristics.

Immediate action

We have not waited for the development of this Plan to address the challenges. Immediate action has been taken to respond to the financial emergency, including spend control measures and increased monitoring. A draft Financial Strategy 2026/27 - 2030/31 was presented to Cabinet on 15th October 2025, updating the base position to inform the plan to achieve a stable and sustainable financial position over the medium term.

An [Action Plan](#) including initial activity against the recommendations made by the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge was reported to the Cabinet on 15th October 2025. Those actions are included in this Plan.

The Council's Audit and Governance Committee will consider the External Auditor Annual Report and its recommendations at its meeting on 27th November 2025.

Improvement Board

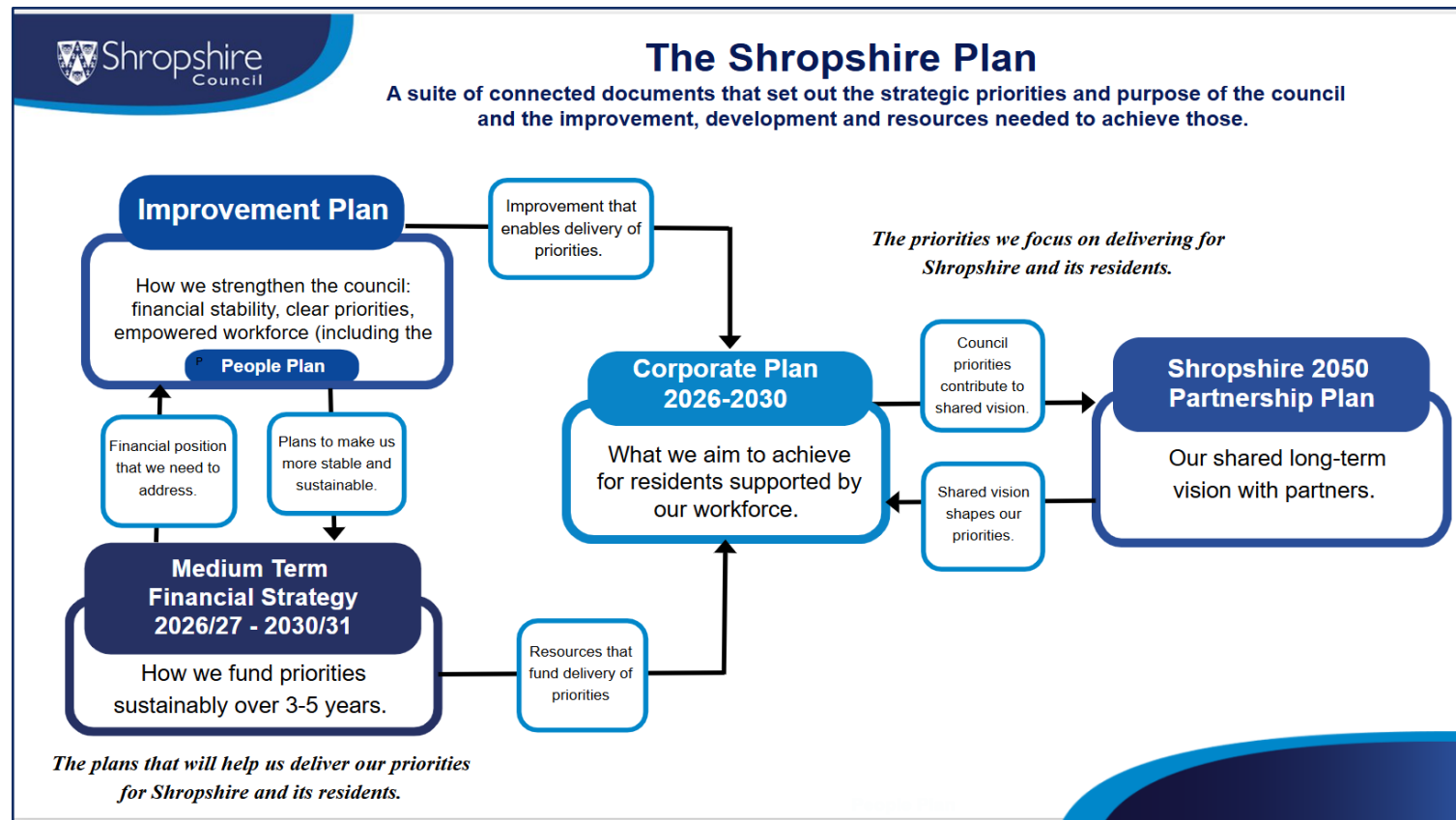
One of the key recommendations from the LGA Peer Challenge was to establish an independently chaired **Improvement Board**. The Board met for its first meeting on 10th November 2025 and will continue to provide external advice, challenge, and expertise to the Council in driving forward the delivery of this Improvement Plan.

Relationship with other strategic plans

The Improvement Plan sits alongside other plans (see Figure 1) to provide an overall framework for the continued improvement of the Council. Together they provide the key components of the **Shropshire Plan**, setting out the strategic priorities and purpose of the Council and the improvement, change and resources needed to achieve those:

- **The Improvement Plan** Sets out our priorities for improving the Council and summarises the plans for achieving financial stability, developing clear priorities, and supporting a workforce that excels (through a People Plan)
- **The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27-2030/31** Summarises the Council's overall financial position, including forecasts, pressures and risks, over the medium-term, and how we will fund priorities.

Figure 1: Shropshire Plan



- **The Corporate Plan 2026-2030:** Informed by the 'New Direction' ambitions, the plan will set out the priorities the Council will focus on to deliver, enable, and influence better outcomes for Shropshire and its residents.
- **The Shropshire 2050 Plan:** Sets out the longer-term shared vision and priorities for the county (as a place) that the council will agree and work with partners on.

Continuous Improvement

Our improvement journey is already underway. It does not start or finish with this Plan. It is a continuous journey, and this Plan builds on and enhances existing improvement work, as well as initiating new priorities and action. It refers to current programmes and projects that support the improvement aims, and new programmes and projects where activity and plans will need to be further developed.

There are a range of recent improvements that have been delivered over the past few months that demonstrate the Council's commitment to, and delivery of, continuous improvement, including:

Strengthening our corporate governance

We have made several changes to our corporate governance arrangements, including:

- The establishment of a Statutory Officers Board in October 2025 that considers significant governance issues and tracks key actions across the Council including monitoring the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations to improve overall compliance.
- An Internal Audit Business Partnering model has been introduced which includes the development of a dashboard to give Service Directors oversight of recommendations made in their areas.

- Strengthening of the Audit & Governance Committee by increasing its membership from 5 to 9 members covering all political parties. There is greater joined up working between Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees supported by a joint chairs meetings and a protocol defining roles and responsibilities. All Internal Audit reports are now shared with Committee members, so they have access to detail to enhance oversight.
- Focussed monitoring of compliance in relation to the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests through the Statutory Officers Board and Information Governance Oversight Group (IGLOO).
- Plans to implement the new Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) complaint handling code from April 2026.

Organisational change and improvement

The Council is focussed on delivering improvement across a range of areas, driven by a corporately supported and resourced transformation programme. This includes projects focussed on operational efficiency and financial savings such as:

- Improving enabling and support services (e.g. HR, Payroll, Legal services and Programme Management Office) as part of the 'New Ways of Working' programme.
- Rebuilding the intranet to deliver visible and impactful change, with a focus on search functionality and content, to support and empower staff.

- A 'Third Party Spend' Programme that has centralised/consolidated the Commissioning function and focussed on delivering cross-council transformation on processes involving external spending, achieving financial savings, and implementing robust contract management and procurement practices.

Much of the above will continue as part of the Improvement Plan and its programmes of action. A review of current transformation activity will be undertaken so it is aligned to the aims and priorities of this Plan and the plans being developed to achieve financial stability.

LGA supported improvement

A range of activity has been provided by the LGA to support learning and improvement. This has included opportunities for elected members and officers to learn from peers in other councils.

Improvements in Housing

We have maintained a focus on reducing the use of B&B accommodations and our plan aims to eliminate the remaining use by 2026, alongside intensifying prevention efforts to reduce the overall need for temporary housing.

Improvement in Children's Services

Following a targeted Ofsted inspection in November 2023, Shropshire Council recognised the urgent need to strengthen its Children's Social Care services. The inspection identified critical areas for improvement, particularly around safeguarding, case management, and oversight. In response, the Council swiftly established the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) which oversaw the development and delivery of a robust improvement plan.

The Council has now transitioned from the CIB to the Children and Families Ambitions Board, reflecting a shift from reactive improvement to strategic ambition and continuous improvement. This was underpinned by strong performance data and positive feedback from external partners.

The journey culminated in the 2025 Ofsted inspection, which awarded Shropshire Council an 'outstanding' judgement. This outcome marked a significant milestone in the Council's improvement journey.

Improvement in Adult Social Care

The improvement journey for adult social care has been shaped by the recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection, which rated the service as 'Good' under the new assessment framework.

Areas for improvement by the inspection, many of which were already recognised by the Council and had been incorporated into existing improvement plans. As part of its ongoing commitment to improvement, the Council has established a Continuous Improvement Group to oversee progress, and we are now building a plan for continuous improvement over the next 3-4 years.

Responding to the financial emergency

A range of immediate and in-year actions, measures and arrangements have been put in place to contain expenditure in-year, and the projected year-end overspend, including:

- Budget Oversight and Spend Strategy (BOSS) meetings with all Service Directors to ensure an accurate and up to date understanding of actual and forecasted spend, and savings position, enabling a deep dive reset of the in-year position.
- The establishment and implementation of arrangements to ensure stringent financial management, including boards that provide strict oversight of discretionary spending (spend control, workforce review, technical boards).
- Clear and regular communication to elected members, senior managers and all staff about the position, and measures to address it so there is an understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Work will continue to develop and deliver a balanced budget year-end position for 2025/26 including in year Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) and recognition of all financial risks.

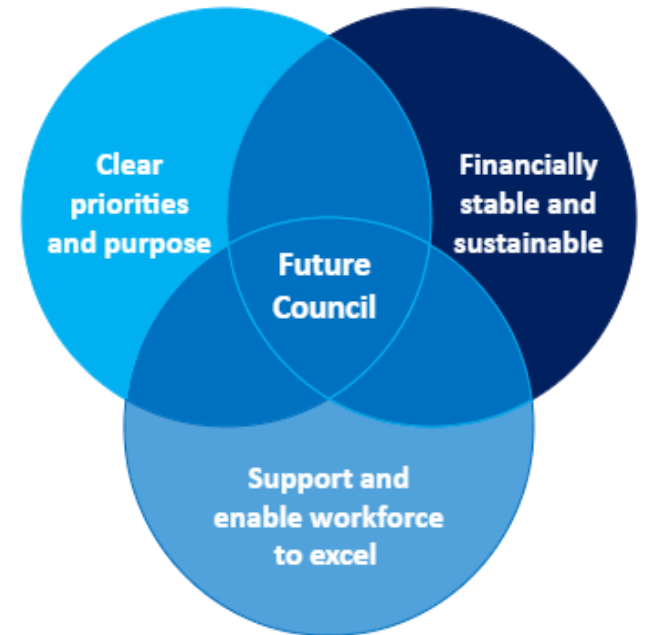
Planning for financial stability

The Council has been undertaking work to develop proposals and plans for budget stability aligned to the 'New Direction' report approved by Council (25th September), including:

- The identification and exploration of priority areas for review and associated savings strategies to bring budget stability and realign the transformation programme to achieve service change, cost reduction, savings and income.
- The development of other short to medium term initiatives including a pre-budget report in December to rebuild the foundations for the Council's budget and align finance strategies to financial stability e.g. a new reserves strategy, fees and charges pricing policy.
- This will be taken forward as part of a Financial Stability programme within this Plan.

Section 2

Our Future Council



Our future council

Our improvement needs to include an immediate response to the financial emergency (declared by Cabinet on 10th September 2025), the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations, and other external review and inspections. But that response needs to be developed and delivered in the context of our future ambitions as a council – both in terms of what we want to deliver, enable and influence for the residents of Shropshire, and how the council will look, feel and operate to do that.

A New Direction

The local elections in May 2025 brought a change in the Council's administration, with the Liberal Democrat Group taking overall control of the Council. A report - '[A New Direction](#)' was presented to the Council meeting on 25th September 2025, outlining the strategic direction proposed by the new administration, intended as a precursor to the development of a new Corporate Plan.

The report proposes a focus across three key priorities: (i) financial recovery and stability, (ii) contract reform and value for money, and (iii) people including community empowerment and partnership, becoming a 'can do' enabling council. Key initiatives include developing a new highways contract, launching the Shropshire Partnership, and supporting community-led initiatives.

The report also proposes a focus on improved customer care, inclusive planning and housing policies, expanded youth and SEND services, climate-conscious infrastructure, and transparent governance.

New ways of working

We know that new ways of working will be required to deliver those priorities while being a financially sustainable organisation. We have started to set out how we will look, feel and operate through:

- A report ('Shropshire Council Strategic Operating Model') presented to the Cabinet on 17th July 2024 that set out the foundations for a future way of working that provides a more efficient way of interacting with customers, a focus on early help and prevention, and working alongside our partners to make sure our residents are connected to support in their communities to stay healthy and well.
- A report ('Shropshire Council Strategic Operating Model') presented to the Council meeting on 27th February 2025 that set out a new operating model and revised structure for the Council. Following the Peer Challenge report and financial emergency, interim arrangements have been put in place to support the new ways of working.

The model is intended to deliver the requirements and associated benefits of a more efficient (reduced cost) and more effective (improved delivery of duties and services) Council, agile enough to respond to the future national and local requirements for local government and delivering financial savings and statutory responsibilities.

It describes how the Council of the future will look and operate, beyond the immediate priority of financial stability. Together with the direction set out in '**New Direction**', it suggests key principles that should guide how the Council will operate to realise the priorities of the Shropshire Plan.

Our changing role and purpose

We will need to be clear about the role and purpose of the Council in achieving our priorities – whether that is delivering services, or enabling, supporting, or influencing others to deliver outcomes. Our focus will increasingly be on working with partners, town and parish councils, and our communities, and on earlier intervention and support that prevents demand for services. This will help us utilise our resources in the most productive way and achieve 'best value'.

Whether our role as a Council is delivering, enabling or influencing outcomes, we will be committed to creating a focused, energised and ‘can do’ organisation that:

- Provides *clear and visible leadership* from our officer Leadership Board and Cabinet to make our priorities for delivery and change clear for everyone.
- Adopts a ‘*One Council*’ approach, prioritising joined up working internally and externally.
- Ensures *our workforce is supported and enabled to excel* and has a relentless focus on *performance and continuous improvement* (enabled through our People Plan).
- Operates *good governance* to ensure compliance with statutory standards and requirements.
- Delivers *value for money* through high standards of financial discipline and management, and a commercial mindset to make every pound count and every minute matter.
- Provides *good customer service* that gives people a consistent and positive experience when they contact and interact with the Council.
- Continues to *engage with our residents* about the changes we need to make – and ensure our priorities are informed by what is most important to them.
- Is a *learning council* that regularly asks for feedback, learns from complaints, and seeks external challenge and review. We will learn from other councils about what they do differently and how they have improved.

Transforming into the council we want to be

It is critical that the Council has a clear direction for its further improvement, financial stability and delivery of policy priorities. The principles in figure 2 (below) will guide how we work and provide a basis for our continued improvement and development into a council that is financially sustainable and equipped to deliver, enable, and influence for Shropshire and its residents in the most effective, efficient and economical way:



Figure 2: principles that guide our we will operate, improve and transform

A clear direction

A key aim of this Improvement Plan is to ensure the Council has a clear purpose for its transformation. That needs to align with our vision for the future and be driven by our financial stability and sustainability plans, and the wider organisation wide improvement needed.

We will review, refresh and re-align our transformation programme so it helps us achieve financial stability and culture change across the organisation. We will also:

- Continue to develop our new ways of working as a council – including further defining our approach to partnership working and working with town and parish councils.
- Further consider and develop our role and purpose in place shaping and the longer-term economic growth of the county.
- Embed the principles in figure 2 across the organisation so that managers and their teams understand what they mean in terms of guiding day-to-day service management and improvement.

National policy context

Our improvement must also be undertaken in the context of national policy and likely changes and developments. For example:

- Devolution: The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill (July 2025): proposes a major shift of powers to local areas through devolution to Strategic Authorities which will have powers over transport, housing, skills, and economic development. The Neighbourhood Governance Review contained in this includes local authorities working with local people.
- Families First Partnership Programme (FFP): A major national reform in children's social care which aims to shift the system toward earlier intervention and family-led solutions, reducing the need for children to enter care and improving outcomes for families.
- National Missions and Local Government Outcomes Framework (LGOF): From April 2026, there will be a new set of priority outcomes that councils will report performance against, expected to cover areas including housing, homelessness, climate and environment, health and wellbeing, children and families.
- Housing policy is increasingly shaped by a strong emphasis on regulatory oversight, ambitious affordable housing delivery, and reforms to renters' rights. The Regulator of Social Housing has reinstated proactive inspections—covering consumer and economic standards for large landlords.
- The Council is taking part in national pilot and pathfinder projects including the National Referral Mechanism, the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Change Programme, and the Local Youth Transformation Fund.

Culture change

Achieving our aims will require changes in our organisational culture, as well as improvements in policy, practice and statutory compliance. The Council needs a positive and inclusive culture, where there are clear roles, responsibilities and expectations of elected members and staff. This will be critical to the Council being member-led, officer-run and resident focused.

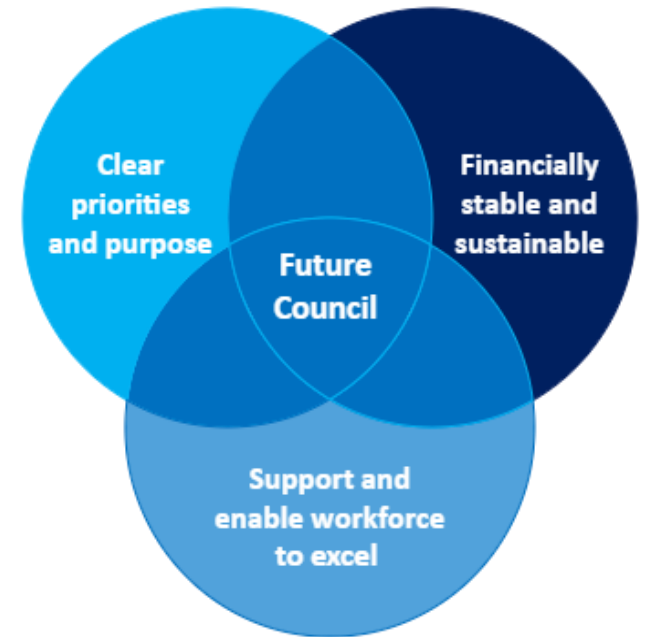
Many of the priority programmes of action will support and enable culture change – particularly those that are focused on supporting and enabling our workforce to excel. This is brought together in our People Plan and Digital Programme.

We will further develop how people are engaged and involved in developing policies and improving services, ensuring that there are more opportunities to inform and shape how we do, and improve, things.

The Plan also focusses on further improving our corporate governance and a culture of compliance, and how some of our internal services and systems can better support people to do their jobs, so we operate more efficiently and effectively, and barriers and constraints to a high-performing culture are removed.

Section 3

Our Improvement Aims & Priorities



Our improvement aims

This Improvement Plan sets out how we will address immediate challenges, such as measures to respond to the financial emergency, while ensuring a focus on the future and how the Council will need to look, feel and operate to best serve the needs of the county and its residents.

We want to be a 'best value' authority that **delivers, enables, and influences for Shropshire and its residents**. To achieve this, we need to be:

A Council that is financially stable and sustainable:

The Council needs to 'live within its means', deliver a balanced budget for 2026/27 and develop a **plan to achieve financial stability and sustainability** beyond that. This will be achieved through immediate spend controls and stronger fiscal discipline, changes to how we do things to deliver further savings or income, ensuring resources align with priorities, securing Exceptional Financial Support, and strengthening our financial planning and management practices.



A Council that has clear priorities and purpose:

The Council needs to be clear on its ambitions and 'new direction' through a **Corporate Plan** that summarises priorities and outcomes which reflect resources available and is clear on our role of enabling and influencing others to deliver. This will include empowering communities and strengthening our partnership working as means to achieving outcomes, and continuing our transformation to a 'can do' organisation that looks, feels and operates differently.



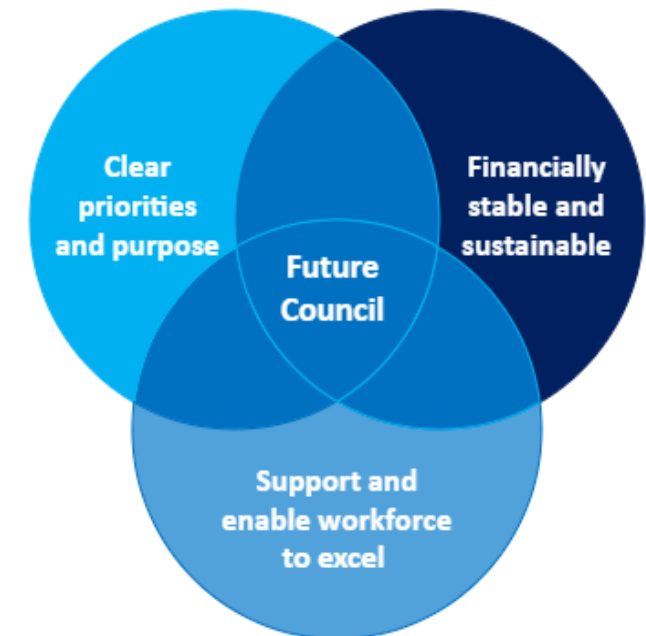
A Council that supports and enables our workforce to excel:

The Council needs to become a modern, customer focussed organisation operating efficiently, effectively and ethically by increasingly focussing on our performance, productivity and value for money. This will be achieved through a **People Plan** that empowers and supports an engaged, diverse and collaborative workforce who understand their roles, are accountable for their responsibilities, and are supported by clear priorities, standards, and governance.



Our Improvement Aims & Priorities

These aims are interdependent. All are critical to our improvement and development towards the council we want to become.



Improvement priorities and programmes

To achieve these aims, the Improvement Plan is focused on an initial set of 9 *Priority Programmes of Action* (see **figure 3**).

It is likely these programmes and projects will change over time. Programmes vary in size and scale. Some will be standalone programmes with their own programme structures and governance, while others comprise several workstreams or projects, or a set of related activities.

Programmes and projects are aligned to a single Improvement Plan aim for governance purposes, but most are interdependent, and the outcomes will be cross-cutting and contribute to all three Improvement Plan aims. All programmes of action aim to make the Council more financially and operationally sustainable.

Some programmes are a continuation of current and planned work (e.g. future council, new ways of working, People Plan), while others need to be fully scoped and their activities defined. For example, a review, refresh and realignment of the transformation programme is likely to result in new projects and activity that are driven by our financial stability plans.

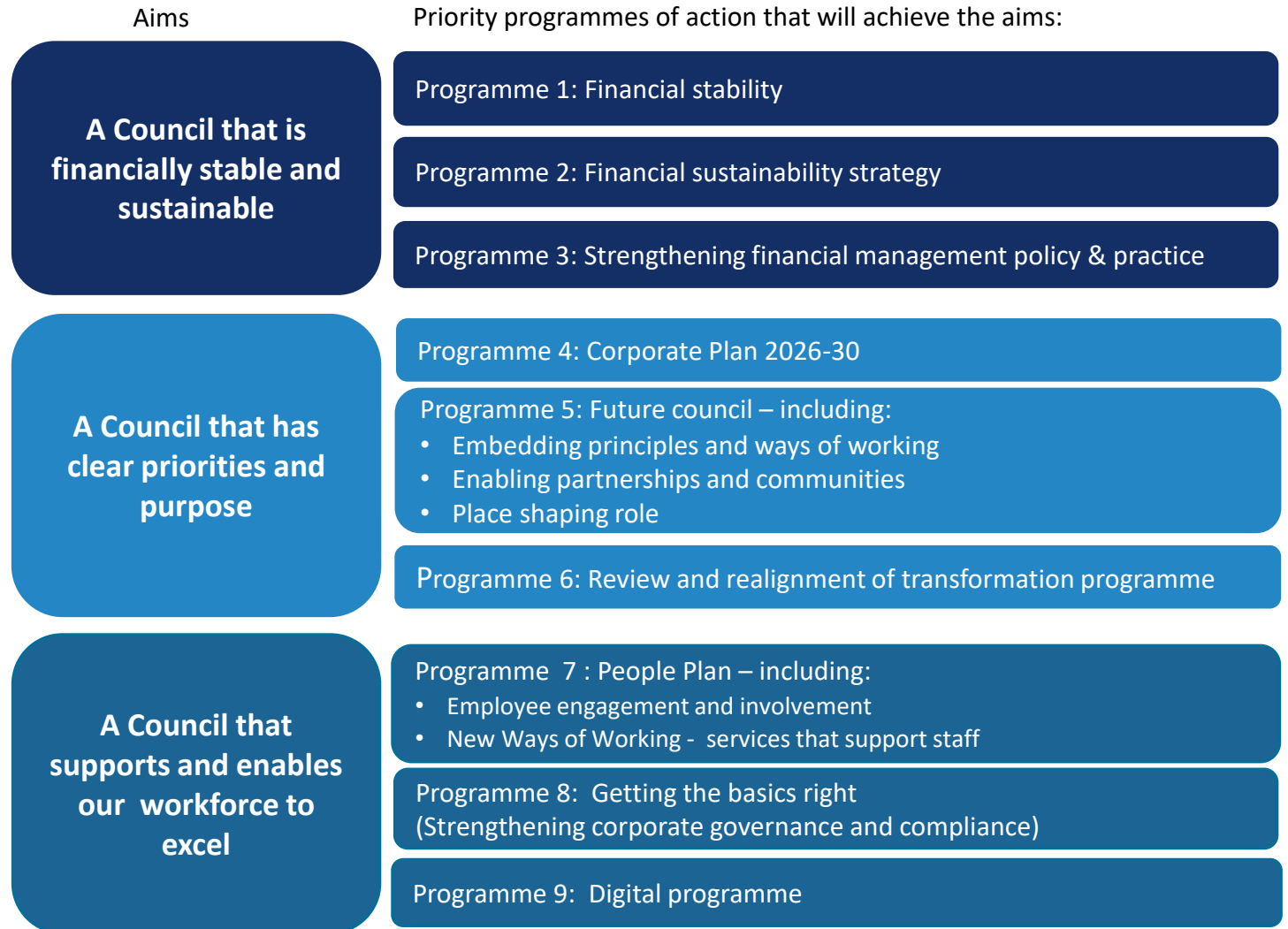


Figure 3: list of improvement priority programmes of activity

Aim: A Council that is financially stable and sustainable

The Council needs to address the current financial emergency and position through actions to secure immediate survival, a plan to achieve financial stability and sustainability beyond that so it can 'live within its means'.

The focus of this aim is:

Immediate controls and fiscal discipline, a plan for financial stability including a balanced budget for 2026/27, and a longer-term strategy for financial sustainability. All underpinned by actions to strengthen financial planning and management policy and practice.

Outcomes and Benefits (the things that will tell us we are achieving our aim):

- A balanced budget for 2026/27
- Improved delivery of savings and income through more robust plans
- Transformation proposals that will deliver financial stability and sustainability
- Robust financial monitoring, management and accountability
- A sustainable financial strategy aligning revised service delivery to available financial resources
- Strengthened procurement and contract management practices

The key programmes of action that will deliver this improvement and change are:

Programme	Description and Purpose
Financial Stability	A range of immediate and actions, measures and arrangements put in place to contain expenditure in-year to reduce and minimise the projected year-end overspend, improve financial monitoring and future budget setting through Budget Spend Control and BOSS (Budget Oversight and Spend Strategy) meetings. The programme is also focussed on the development of the council's approach and route to financial stability (including revised service delivery, strong plans for reducing expenditure and increasing income through transformation, asset management, reviewing our capital programme, and Exceptional Financial Support) and the development of a proposed balanced budget for 2026/27.
Financial Sustainability Strategy	The development of an approach and strategy that outlines how the longer-term goal of financial sustainability will be achieved ensuring the Council 'lives within its means' and does not become reliant on Exceptional Financial Support.
Strengthening financial management practice and policy	A programme of actions to strengthen financial literacy and discipline across the organisation, including significantly strengthening the internal control environment in response to the opinion of the Chief Audit Executive, and responding to the External Auditor recommendations. The programme will ensure there is improved financial compliance across the organisation by strengthening procurement and contract management practices, budget monitoring and forecasting, income collection and debt recovery.

Aim: A Council that has clear priorities and purpose

The Council needs to be clear on its ambitions and 'new direction' through a Corporate Plan that summarises priorities and outcomes which reflect resources available and is clear on our role of enabling and influencing others to deliver – including empowering communities and strengthening our partnerships.

The focus of this aim is:

Creating and communicating the Council's priorities and its role in delivering them so it can work more effectively, efficiently and economically with others to achieve outcomes, and be clear on how the organisation needs to change and transform to do that while becoming financially stable and sustainable.

Outcomes and Benefits (the things that will tell us we are achieving our aim):

- New plans approved - Corporate Plan 2026-30 and 2050 partnership vision and plan
- Increased employee understanding of council priorities and their roles in delivering them
- Transformation programme aligned with corporate plan, improvement plan and financial stability plan
- More transformation projects delivered on time and within budget
- Future Council principles embedded and guiding delivery, transformation and continuous improvement
- More collaboration with partners and communities
- Increased stakeholder confidence and satisfaction

The key programmes of action that will deliver this improvement and change are:

Programme	Description and Purpose
Corporate Plan 2026-30	The development of a new Corporate Plan informed by political ambitions set out in the 'New Direction' and financial position. The programme will also include activity to ensure the corporate performance framework and business planning are aligned to the Plan.
Future Council	Continuing the work to develop how the council supports, enables, empowers and influences others to deliver priority outcomes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding the principles that guide how the council will operate and provide a basis for its continued improvement and transformation. • A focus on developing an approach to working with town and parish councils. • Place shaping – the role and purpose of the Council and development of a long-term vision, economic growth strategy, and outcomes for the county.
Review and Realignment of Transformation Programme	A review of current transformation programme to ensure it is aligned with the future ways of working, national policy context, and the need to deliver financial stability and sustainability. The programme will also ensure there are robust programme management, support and assurance arrangements in place.

Aim: A Council that supports and enables its workforce to excel

The Council needs to become a modern, customer focussed organisation operating efficiently, effectively and ethically by increasingly focussing on our performance, productivity and value for money.

The focus of this aim is:

The development and implementation of a **People Plan** that empowers an engaged, diverse and collaborative workforce who understand their roles, are accountable for their responsibilities, and are supported by clear priorities and standards, and strengthened governance and compliance.

Outcomes and Benefits (the things that will tell us we are achieving our aim):

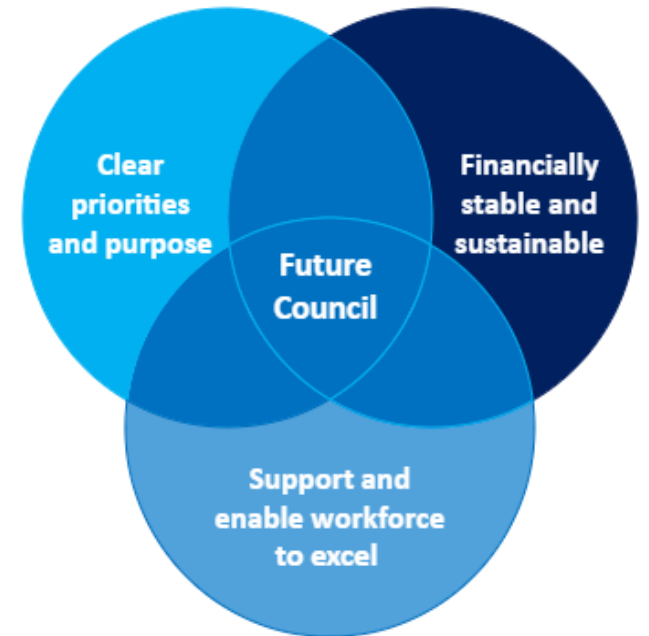
- Increased levels of staff satisfaction and engagement
- Reduced levels of staff absence
- Less turnover of staff
- Increased numbers of PDPs completed
- Increased levels of mandatory training completed
- Increased performance for FOI and complaints handling

The key programmes of action that will deliver this improvement and change are:

Programme	Description and Purpose
People Plan	<p>A Plan and programme of activity to become an organisation where people are proud to work for, feel valued, and can thrive with the right support and development that enables them to perform to their best. There will be an initial focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging and Empowering Employees: Further development of staff engagement and involvement, including activity to improve the visibility of managerial and political leaders, and evolving and embedding existing channels and mechanisms that facilitate a dialogue, and support and inform change across the organisation. • Improving support services: Continuing the programme of activity to implement the New Ways of Working for Enabling Services and Processes, including an initial focus on Information Governance and HR & Payroll.
Getting the basics right (Strengthening governance and compliance)	<p>A programme of actions and activity focussed on strengthening overall corporate governance and ethical standards, by improving awareness, understanding of, and compliance with, the constitution and key operating policies, processes, procedure rules and customer standards (e.g. finance, procurement, information management, data protection, complaints, FOI). Alongside the programme focussed on 'strengthening financial management' it will ensure the Council has a tighter grip on its delivery, performance and risk management.</p>
Digital programme	<p>A programme of initiatives and developments to modernise our services, improve operational efficiency, and better serve our residents and stakeholders, building on the Digital Customer programme, reviewing and reprioritising planned initiatives, and the implementation of a new intranet. At the heart of the programme is an ambition to provide simpler, efficient, secure, predictive, data-led services, that cost less to deliver.</p>

Section 4

Making sure we deliver



Making sure we deliver the Plan

There are three key things we will do to make sure we deliver the Improvement Plan:

1. *Governance and Assurance:* We will put in place governance and assurance arrangements based on agreed principles (see **figure 4**), including clear accountability, responsibility and transparency. There will be relevant risk management and delivery monitoring, facilitated by a Corporate Programme Management Office (PMO) ensuring independence and integrity. These arrangements will help ensure the Improvement Plan is delivered and achieves the required progress and impacts.
2. *Supporting delivery:* Significant and sustained investment is required to deliver the scale and pace of change required. We will ensure the Plan and its programmes are supported through relevant resources and support. New programmes of action will need to be resourced, which may mean reviewing and deciding on where business as usual activity can be reprioritised and capacity redeployed, or assessing and identifying where there are additional resource requirements.
3. *Engagement, Involvement and Communications:* Engagement has taken place at different levels and through different forums throughout the process of developing the Improvement Plan and will continue as the Plan is delivered.

This has ensured understanding of the Plan, the context it is responding to and the aims we are pursuing. It has also ensured it has been developed collaboratively and that priorities have been continuously iterated using internal peer review, challenge and feedback (via Senior Leaders Forum).

Corporate Strategy & Change function

Led by the Service Director (Strategy & Change) and comprising strategic support and enabling functions – including the programme management office, policy, strategy, performance, and communications teams – the function will provide both advisory (guidance, advice, standards) and delivery capacity to support change and improvement across the organisation.

Risk management

Risks and interdependencies between programmes and projects will be set out and managed for each one. There are also overarching risks and dependencies across the whole Improvement Plan which are set out in **Appendix 2**.

Risks will be reviewed regularly and will change e.g. with new risks being included as and when they are identified. The table of risks is not an exhaustive list, and both the risks and mitigations will be kept under review.

Improvement Plan Performance Framework

The priority programmes of action contribute to defined outcomes. Those are underpinned by key performance indicators (KPIs) – listed at **Appendix 3** - that will enable progress to be demonstrated. Reporting on delivery will use a combination of delivery milestones and KPIs.

Reporting progress

Regular reporting to the Cabinet, Audit Committee and Transformation & Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee will take place for the duration of the Plan. This will provide assurance to elected members and residents we are making progress towards the commitments we have made

Assessing and managing impacts

Unplanned consequences and negative impacts of changes the Council is making will continue to be a key consideration through wider governance and assurance. In particular, the impact on residents of further budget savings and how they are delivered. This will be captured and managed through completing Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for all new policy/strategy development and major changes to service delivery, and consultation (where relevant and required), to ensure the implications of our decisions on our residents are understood and considered.

Governance and Assurance

Our governance, monitoring and assurance arrangements will provide a clear framework to ensure the Improvement Plan is delivered and achieves the required progress and impacts. The principles that underpin this are set out in the **figure 4** below:

Principle	Arrangements
Accountability and responsibility for delivery	<p>Senior Accountable Officer (SAO): Each Improvement Plan Aim has an SAO, accountable for ensuring the outcomes of the programmes within their aim are achieved. This will include effective and timely engagement with stakeholders such as elected members. The SAO will chair a Portfolio Board for the Aim they are accountable for.</p> <p>Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL): Responsibility for ensuring day-to-day delivery of programmes and projects. RDL activities might include ensuring the setting up of project teams, steering groups, arrangements and processes to progress delivery, and escalating key risks and blockages not resolved in the project.</p>
Seeking external challenge and learning	We are committed to seeking external challenge and learning from other councils, organisations and experts to contribute to the development and delivery of the improvement plan. An externally chaired Improvement Board is a significant component of this principle, where the Board will provide challenge and ideas, and the Council will be sharing evidence of assurance and progress.
Governance structures	<p>The Council's existing governance structures maintain a core role in the governance for the improvement plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member-led Governance - Council and Cabinet provide the political decision making, and Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Audit and Governance Committee provide the oversight and assurance. Officer-led governance – the Leadership Board has a role in direction setting, operating as a Transformation and Change Board, holding SAOs and RDLs to account and being a forum for escalation, receiving significant change requests, resource allocation, and oversight of interdependencies between programmes and projects.
Monitoring and assurance	Impact and progress assurance reporting will be carried out each month (initially) to ensure a timely, consistent and accurate view of delivery against the Plan. It will be important to ensure a clear picture of each programme and project is maintained, as appropriate. A deeper dive review will be completed periodically on delivery to help confirm the scope, resourcing and timeframe of each programme/project. This will also provide the evidence to stop, change or continue.
Transparency	There will be one view of progress and impact through the progress assurance reporting. This will provide assurance on the progress being made. Monthly reporting will be through the Corporate Programme Management Office (PMO) to the Transformation and Change Board [Leadership Board] and to the Improvement Board.
Member scrutiny	Executive members will provide oversight and challenge on the programmes and projects aligned to their portfolios. Group leaders are members of the Improvement Board and Portfolio Holders (or their deputies) will be invited to attend as required. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will take a view of the progress and impact of delivering the improvement plan in their remits and the Audit and Governance Committee will maintain their role looking at improvement plan risk management and controls.

Figure 4: Governance principles

The role of the Corporate Programme Management Office (PMO)

The Corporate Programme Management Office (PMO) will play a key role in the supporting the delivery of the improvement plan – ensuring we have both ‘grip’ and ‘drive’. The PMO will fulfil three functions:

- *Monitoring and assurance:* ensuring progress monitoring happens, that outputs are reviewed and challenged each month, and providing the analysis required by the Transformation and Change Board (Leadership Board) and Improvement Board.
- *Supporting delivery:* providing project management, business analyst and change consultant capability to support the delivery of the Council’s transformation activity to achieve its improvement aims. The PMO will also maintain an overview of the transformation requirements for the whole council which will inform resourcing decisions.
- *Setting the standards:* providing guidance, toolkits and templates to support consistent project and programme management standards and best practice across the organisation.

Making sure we deliver: governance and assurance

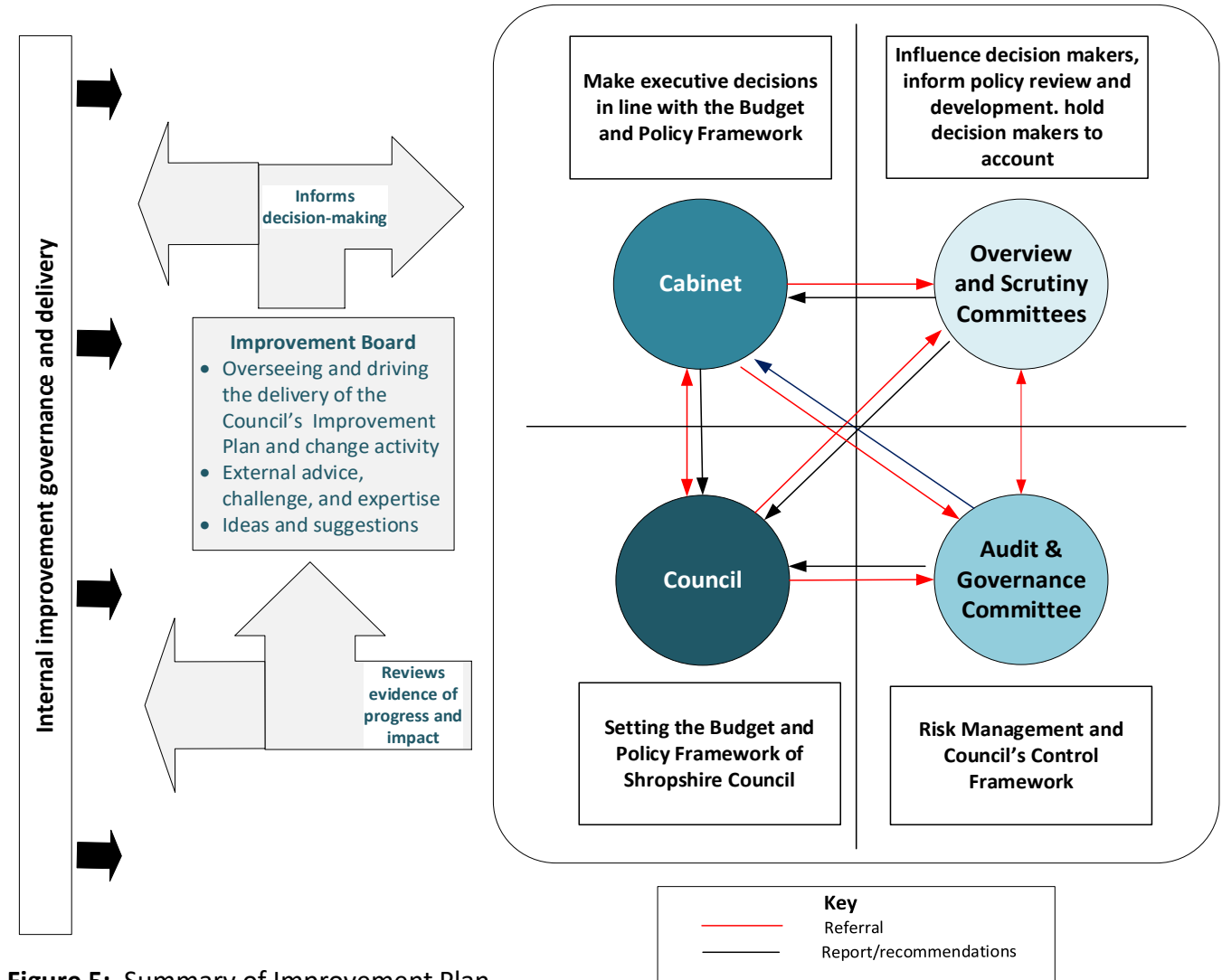


Figure 5: Summary of Improvement Plan governance structures

Resourcing the Plan

The Plan incorporates existing programmes together with newer and emerging projects. As such there are already some resources in place and deployed in these areas with work established and underway. Additional budget provision, reliant on Exceptional Financial Support (EFS), will need to be aligned to new activity.

The further scoping of these programmes of work will define further resourcing requirements. The SAOs and the RDLs will work together to consider how the programmes and projects they are accountable and responsible for will be resourced. Our resourcing approach is summarised in **figure 6** below.

External support

The Council has been supported by the Local Government Association (LGA) in developing its improvement response and will continue to work closely with them and others including the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS). Further support may include bringing in independent external expertise and perspectives to provide challenge to major change and improvement activity to identify where there is potential to do more or identify further opportunities.

Component	Approach
Internal Council resource	A refocussing of internal resources to support the development and delivery of transformation and budget savings proposals. Identification of capacity from across the organisation that can potentially be redirected and/or deployed to support Improvement Plan delivery
Interim additional capacity	Short-term capacity and technical expertise that will work in a blended way with and within internal teams to support development and delivery of improvement and change proposals.
Transformation support	Engagement of external partners where necessary to support the delivery of major change proposals and projects

Figure 6: Resourcing approach

Making sure we deliver: Enabling and supporting delivery

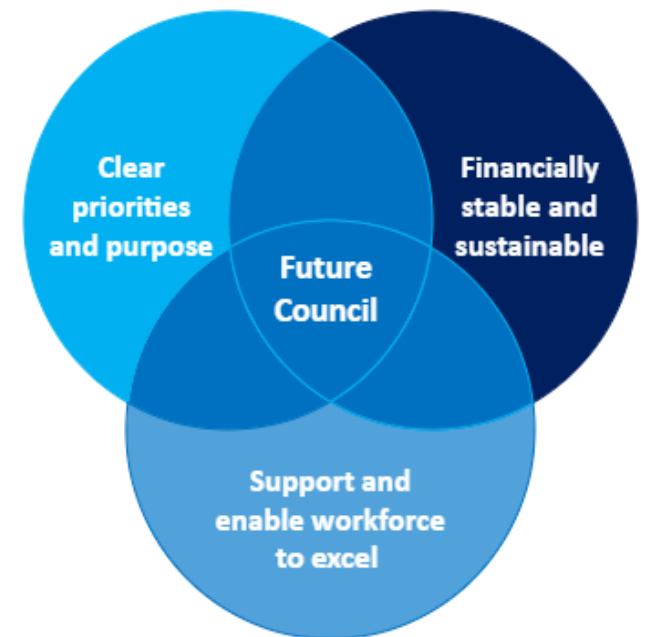
Engagement and involvement

We have engaged through the following activity to inform the development of the Plan:

Mechanism / Activity	Purpose /Description	Audience / Stakeholders
Weekly CEX email bulletin to all staff	Regular and frequent update on the Plan development, and promotion of engagement opportunities	Staff
Senior Leadership Forum (SLF)	Updates on Plan development, and engagement to inform priorities and activity to deliver those	Top 3 tiers of managers
Staff Engagement Hub	Engagement Form to suggest ideas for improvements in policy and practice	Staff
Leader/Deputy Leader	Updates on the development of the Improvement Plan and seek steer on key issues	Leader and Deputy Leader
Executive Directors and Cabinet Members	Updates on the development of the Improvement Plan to test key aims and priorities	Executive Members/Leadership Board
Transformation & Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Share thinking and proposed aims and priorities for feedback. A run through draft Plan for feedback.	O&S Committee Members
All member briefing	To update members on the Improvement Plan and explain its purpose and priorities	All members
Budget Forum	To engage group leaders on the development of the Plan (finance stability elements)	Group Leaders
Improvement Board	To present elements of the draft Plan for review and feedback	Improvement Board (includes Group Leaders)

As the Council's improvement journey continues, we will continue to engage and communicate on our plans and progress to our residents, elected members, staff, partners, and other stakeholders. We will listen and learn from them and adjust and update the Plan in line with new and emerging priorities.

Appendix 1: Priority Programmes of Action - Summaries



Financial Stability

A range of immediate and in-year actions, measures and arrangements put in place to contain expenditure in-year to reduce and minimise the projected year-end overspend. The development of a plan detailing the council's approach and route to financial and operational stability – including opportunities for reducing expenditure and increasing income

Senior Accountable Officer (SAO)

Executive Director (S151 Officer)

Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL):

Deputy S151 Officer

Executive Member:

Finance Portfolio Holder

Activity:
Start
End

Declare a financial emergency and agree immediate emergency measures to reduce all non-essential spending between September 2025 and March 2026

Sept 2025

Sept 2025

Establish and implement arrangements to ensure stringent financial management – including boards that provide strict oversight of discretionary spending

Sept 2025

Mar 2026

Undertake a deep dive reset of the in-year position (including learning from the Internal Audit Outturn review) – through BOSS (Budget Oversight and Spend Strategy) meetings with all Service Directors to ensure accurate and up to date actual and forecasted spend, and savings position in year, to inform an in-year EFS application

Oct 2025

Dec 2025

Develop and deliver a balanced budget year-end position for 2025/26 including in-year Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) and recognition of all financial risks (including NWRR write off, transformation funding, unachieved savings and spending pressures)

Oct 2025

June 2026

Implement plans for all recommendations and lessons learnt from internal and external reviews and support including the Statutory Recommendation from External Audit

Nov 2025

Mar 2026

Develop a proposed balanced budget for 2026/27 for Council approval, utilising:

- BOSS meetings to ensure 2026/27 Budget takes account of existing service delivery, appropriate workforce needs, investment requirements linked to change programmes, and robust saving plans to deliver cost reductions and increased income
- Short term initiatives including a Pre-Budget report to rebuild the foundations for the Council's 2026/27 budget and align finance strategies to future financial stability e.g. a new fees and charges pricing policy, and reserves strategy
- Continued liaison with MHCLG including an application for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) 2026/27
- Public consultation on 2026/27 Budget setting the scene for the MTFS to 2030/31 and implications for service delivery both internally and with residents

Oct 2025

Feb 2026

Identify and develop a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) aligned to the Improvement Plan, including:

- Further BOSS meetings with all Service Directors to set robust foundations for stable budgets over the MTFS period aligning to key themes from the New Direction report approved by Council, plans and requirements for growth and investment that bring stability
- Plans for review of all services to identify the cost of minimum viable service provision, priority areas and opportunities for transformation activity through a funded change programme over the medium term, with robust plans for savings delivery and income generation
- Revised and affordable Capital Programme reviewing all funding including developer contributions, external funding and asset rationalisation to deliver capital receipts
- A clear plan over the MTFS period to provide a stable foundation for systemic transformation of the council while able to deliver safe and reliable services at all levels
- An EFS strategy over later years of the MTFS including a clear exit plan from the temporary use of EFS

Oct 2025

Feb 2026

Financial Sustainability Strategy

The development of an approach that outlines how the longer-term goal of financial sustainability will be achieved

Senior Accountable Officer (SAO)	Executive Director (S151 Officer)
Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL):	Deputy S151 Officer
Executive Member:	Finance Portfolio Holder

Activity:	Start	End
Through a revised focus considering the next five financial years, complete the planning to deliver a sustainable financial position for Shropshire Council over the medium term through a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved by Council reflective of the Council's Improvement Plan and ultimately new Corporate Plan.	Dec 2025	Mar 2026
Deliver a robust Section 25 Statement to Council providing assurance to Members on the robustness of estimates used to define costs and available resources over the medium term, and the adequacy of reserves and General Fund Balances to provide a stable route to financial sustainability.	Feb 2026	Feb 2026
Develop, demonstrate and agree a pathway to reducing reliance on EFS over the MTFS period with reducing requirements and a clear exit plan from EFS at an agreed point in the future.	Dec 2025	Mar 2027
Work with the Improvement Board and partners across the region and nationally to influence funding and spend models to deliver a sustainable route away from the structural funding deficit for Shropshire Council.	Dec 2025	Mar 2027
Build on the recommendations contained in the external audit Statutory recommendation, key and improvement recommendations to ensure robust planning is in place to deliver a strong Value for Money opinion in future years.	Jan 2026	Jul 2027
Develop and deliver a suite of updated plans and strategies to align around the Council's future sustainability aim, moving the Council from financial stability to the long-term aim of financial sustainability. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Strategy Capital Strategy Treasury Strategy Reserves Strategy EFS Strategy DSG Deficit Recovery Strategy 	Apr 2026	Mar 2027

Strengthening financial management practice and policy

The programme will ensure there is improved financial compliance across the organisation by strengthening policy, practice and approaches to budget monitoring, controls and forecasting, income and debt collection, procurement practices and contract management

Senior Accountable Officer (SAO)	Executive Director (S151 Officer)
Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL):	Strategic Director - Commissioning
Executive Member:	Finance Portfolio Holder

Activity:	Start	End
Develop and deliver an action plan to strengthen the Internal Control Environment in response to the Limited Assurance opinion of the Chief Audit Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and agree the action plan Deliver the action plan 	Oct 2025 April 2026	March 2026 June 2027
Consider and agree further responses to External Auditor Annual Report and statutory recommendation (as directed by Audit & Governance Committee and Council)	Nov 2025	Jan 2026
Financial literacy training to create strong financial literacy skills across the organisation to develop skills and discipline - including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop clear training plans for budget holders Deliver training and set a clear expectation for all budget holders to be fully accountable for delivery within agreed budgets 	Nov 2025 Feb 2026	Feb 2026 Jun 2026
Improve financial management practices - including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplify budget lines/codes and cost centres Improved controls and processes for moving budgets/savings/funds between codes (e.g. internal transfers) Better communications around year-end adjustments An accountability framework – with clear budget holder responsibilities 	Feb 2026	Jul 2026
Improve procurement and contract management function and practice – including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement new structure for procurement and contracts team Look at income for efficiencies Commission new contracts and procurement system A review of Third party spend Development and roll out of a Contracts Resource Toolkit 	Oct 2025 Oct 2025 Jun 2025 Oct 2025 Jan 2026	May 2026 Mar 2026 Mar 2026 Apr 2026/ongoing Sept 2026
Development of new strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Commissioning 	Nov 2025 Dec 2025	May 2026 May 2026
Continue to embed new governance for commissioning, contract management and procurement (e.g. commercial and commissioning delivery group, joint commissioning delivery group, commissioning, procurement and contracts performance board)	Aug 2025	Dec 2026/ongoing
Review and refresh the approach to income collection and debt recovery to improve collection performance	Jun 2026	Dec 2026

Corporate Plan 2026-30

The development of a new **Corporate Plan** that is informed by political ambitions set out in the 'New Direction' and financial position. The programme will also include activity to ensure a corporate performance framework is aligned to the Plan.

Senior Accountable Officer (SAO)	Executive Director (DASS)
Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL):	Service Director – Strategy & Change
Executive Member:	Leader & Deputy Leader

Activity:	Start	End
Agreement of 'New Direction' at Full Council	Sept 2025	Sept 2025
Establish with Members a clear framework for the different phases of activity to realise financial stability, and the plans to achieve the outcomes of the council. Confirmation of the outcomes and priorities of the administration	Nov 2025	Dec 2025
Carry out Shropshire 2050 workshop sessions with stakeholders to establish the long-term vision that the corporate plan fits in, incorporating the outcomes and priorities of the administration	Jan 2026	Feb 2026
Deliver a programme of engagement with all members, staff, partners and communities/ residents on the outcomes and priorities for the plan based on what we want Shropshire 2050 to be. Bring together the feedback to inform the development of the plan and the actions to be taken over the plan period.	Jan 2026	Mar 2026
Co-produce the cross-cutting delivery plans to deliver the outcomes and priorities of the plan and confirm the 'grip' support, and governance arrangements, including the KPIs and milestones that will demonstrate progress and impact.	Mar 2026	Apr 2026
Corporate Plan 2026-30 agreed and adopted	May 2026	Ongoing
Review and update the Performance Management Framework, dashboards and reporting, performance monitoring and management requirements to align with the new Corporate Plan	July 2026	Sept 2026

Future Council (1)

Continuing the work to develop how the Council supports, enables, and influences others to deliver priority outcomes, including an initial focus on:

- I. Embedding the principles that guide how the council will operate, improve and transform
- II. Developing our partnerships with town and parish councils
- III. Developing our Place Shaping role and purpose of the Council and development of a long-term vision, economic growth strategy and outcomes for the county, co-created with partners and communities

Senior Accountable Officer (SAO)	Executive Director (DASS)
Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL):	Director of Children's Services (i) Service Director – Communities (ii)
Executive Members:	Leader and Deputy Leader (i) & (ii)

Activity:
(i) Embedding the principles that guide how the council will operate, improve and transform:

Introduce and hold Regular Senior Leadership Forums for engagement between Leadership Board and their direct reports.	Sept 2025	On-going
Develop a 'Future Council' framework that translates the future Council operating principles into good practice characteristics of service leadership, management and delivery, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a steering group of SLF members to provide leadership, challenge and input 2. Co-production of a framework through the steering group and reality checking via a sounding board of staff 3. Embed the vision, operating principles and Future Council framework into service planning guidance (for 2027/28) 4. Develop proposals for embedding the framework as a basis for wider improvement activity 5. Identify and/or build organisational capacity, guidance, support for each of the elements of the Future Council framework 6. Embed the Framework into a Role of the Manager (part of the People Plan programme) 	Dec 2025	May 2026

(ii) Developing our partnerships with town and parish Councils:

Carryout Overview and Scrutiny review into the opportunities and arrangements for local partnership working across three phases of work <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The delegation of functions to Town and Parish Councils (T&PCs) 2. Potential groupings of local councils to deliver local priorities and outcomes 3. Options for local partnership working governance structures and arrangements 	Aug 2025 Nov 2025 Feb 2025	Mar 2026 Mar 2026 Sep 2026
Identify and quantify potential initial opportunities for the delegation of functions to town and parish Council	Oct 2025	Dec 2025
Roll out programme of developing further opportunities and partnerships with town and parish councils (T&PCs)	Dec 2025	Ongoing

Future Council (2)

Continuing the work to develop how the Council supports, enables, and influences others to deliver priority outcomes, including an initial focus on:

- I. Embedding the principles that guide how the council will operate, improve and transform
- II. Developing our approach to working with town and parish councils
- III. Developing our place shaping role and purpose of the Council and development of a long-term vision, economic growth strategy and outcomes for the county, co-created with partners and communities

Senior Accountable Officer (SAO)	Executive Director (DASS)
Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL):	Service Director – Place Shaping (iii) Service Director – Infrastructure (iii)
Executive Member:	Transport & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder (iii)

Activity:
(iii) Developing our place shaping role, purpose and strategy:

Start	End
Recruitment of Service Director (Place Shaping)	Nov 2025 Dec 2025
Position the Council regionally, working proactively to formalise the delivery plan for the Marches Forward Partnership	Nov 2025 March 2026
Utilise the Council's place leadership role to convene strategic partnership working across the county, bringing together partner intelligence and alignment of investment programmes around shared priorities into a Shropshire based investment and infrastructure network	Nov 2025 June 2026 (ongoing)
Develop, with members and partners, a consistent narrative of place for Shropshire that describes the place it will be (which will form the basis of a Shropshire 2050 vision and plan) (CPC action)	Feb 2026 June 2026
Extend regional working to explore and develop future opportunities under the Government's devolution agenda, producing an integrated, long-term plan (Spatial Development Strategies) and creating a platform for strategic engagement and investment	Dec 2025 Dec 2026
Develop a robust investment pipeline which responds to growth opportunities and addresses future sustainability and resilience challenges, providing a clear delivery plan for a refreshed Economic Growth Strategy and an evidence led basis for the Local Plan Review.	Dec 2025 Dec 2026

Review and Realignment of Transformation Programme

A review of current transformation programme to ensure it is aligned with the future ways of working, national policy context, and the need to deliver financial stability and sustainability. The programme will also ensure there are robust programme management, support and assurance arrangements in place.

Senior Accountable Officer (SAO)	Executive Director (DASS)
Responsible Delivery Leads (RDL):	Service Director – Care & Well Being Service Director – Strategy & Change
Executive Members:	Leader and Deputy Leader

Activity:	Start	End
Develop a refreshed Transformation and Change Programme - including:		
Initial review of current programme to determine non-priority projects that can be pursued as continuous improvement rather than corporately supported transformation	Oct 2025	Jan 2026
Develop new transformation proposals, informed by the financial stability planning, other improvement priorities, future council principles, and national policy thinking and direction (e.g. Families First Partnership) and through engagement with senior managers and elected members	Oct 2025	Dec 2025
Develop fully costed transformation projects and associated delivery plans that will contribute to financial stability and sustainability over the medium-term	Dec 2025	Ongoing
Develop and implement new Improvement Plan governance arrangements that enable oversight of transformation, improvement and change – including: (a) Further strengthen the PMO including development of a monitoring and assurance function (b) Develop and implement a new monitoring framework with quality assurance by the PMO and reports to Leadership Board (Transformation and Change) (c) Develop an approach for challenging and testing transformation and budget savings proposals at an early stage of their formation	Dec 2025 Dec 2025 Feb 2026	Feb 2026 Feb 2026 April 2026
Review, refresh and relaunch corporate guidance, standards and templates for project and programme management	Jan 2026	April 2026
Recruitment of Service Director (Strategy & Change)	Nov 2025	Dec 2025

People Plan

A Plan and programme of activity to be an organisation that people are proud to work for, feel valued, and can thrive with the right support and development that enables them to perform to their best. There will be an initial focus on **engaging and empowering employees** and **improving support services**

Senior Accountable Officer (SAO)	Executive Director - DPH
Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL):	Service Director – Children & Young People
Executive Members:	Leader and Deputy Leader

Activity:

Develop and deliver the **People Plan** for the Council – focused on the priorities of: Our Culture, Leadership & Talent, Capability and Capacity, Performance and Systems & Establishment – including an initial focus on the following projects:

- One Purpose, underpinned by our Values
- Engagement and Communications
- Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging
- Valuing and Supporting new and current staff
- Leadership and management programme including good conversations
- Workforce skills audit
- Employee performance management framework

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Engagement and Communications:

Further development of staff engagement and internal communications, including activity to improve the visibility of managerial and political leaders and evolving existing channels and mechanisms that facilitate a dialogue to support and inform change across the organisation – including:

- Engage employees about how they want to be informed, involved and engaged
- Continued Pulse Surveys, including a six-monthly survey that provides a temperature check across several staff sentiment and perception measures
- Develop and implement a new internal communications and employee engagement plan/programme that introduces new ways of engaging and involving employees

Improving support services:

Continuing the programme of activity to implement the New Ways of Working (NOM) for Enabling Services and Processes – including:

- Information Governance and HR & Payroll – through Sprint review and continuous improvement plan
- Roll out the approach to other service areas – including property services and finance
- Continue the work to define a set of common principles for enabling service Business Partners

Building on previous work, undertake a review and benchmarking of services (staffing, systems, processes) supported by the LGA – with an initial programme focussing on: Legal, Finance, Revenues & Benefits

Start	End
Dec 2025	Jul 2026
Dec 2025 Nov 2025 Jan 2026	Jan 2026 On-going Apr 2026
Nov 2025	Dec 2025/on-going
Dec 2025	March 2026

Getting the Basics Right (strengthening corporate governance and compliance)

A programme of actions and activity focussed on strengthening overall corporate governance and ethical standards, by improving awareness, understanding of, and compliance with, the constitution and key operating policies, processes, procedure rules and customer standards (e.g. finance, procurement, information management, complaints, FOI). Alongside the programme focussed on 'Strengthen financial management' it will ensure the Council has a tighter grip on its delivery, performance and risk management.

Senior Accountable Officer (SAO)	Executive Director - DPH
Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL):	Service Director – Planning, Legal and Governance
Executive Member:	Finance Portfolio Holder

Activity:

	Start	End
Establish a statutory officer board consisting of the Head of Paid Service (HoPS), S.151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer to provide oversight and direction of key issues for the council and drive good governance (including implementation of internal audit recommendations).	Oct 2025	Oct 2025/on-going
Provide a clear message from the Head of Paid Service reiterating the importance of compliance with our governance and assurance arrangements	Oct 2025	Oct 2025/on-going
Continue activity to address and improve information governance (including FOI responses, data protection, etc).	Oct 2025	Dec 2025/on-going
Provide an analysis of the biggest risks to compliance across the organisation and use this to determine the priorities for action and attention (including development of a performance dashboard for monitoring and managing compliance moving forward)	Nov 2025	Jan 2026
Develop a coordinated and consolidated approach to planning for, and responding to, external review, audit and inspections – to include: (a) Collating a programme of planned and anticipated inspections, reviews and audit activity so we can support them corporately (b) One plan/approach for monitoring of responses to all corporate governance recommendations from inspection, review and self-assessment activity (e.g. AGS, peer challenge, external audit, CQC, etc) – ensuring oversight of performance, implementation and impact	Nov 2025	March 2026
Undertake a review of mandatory training and refresh the programme (People Plan action)	Jul 2025	Apr 2026
Review and refresh the Council's constitution - including: • Work with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) to review and refresh the Council's Constitution • Develop and deliver a programme of activity to support the implementation of the new Constitution	Nov 2025	May 2026
Develop and implement a process for learning lessons from complaints (People Plan action)	Jan 2026	Apr 2026
Develop and deliver Audit Committee training (supported by LGA)	Nov 2025	Jan 2026
Implementation of the new Local Government Ombudsman's complaint handling code from April 2026.	Nov 2025	Apr 2026

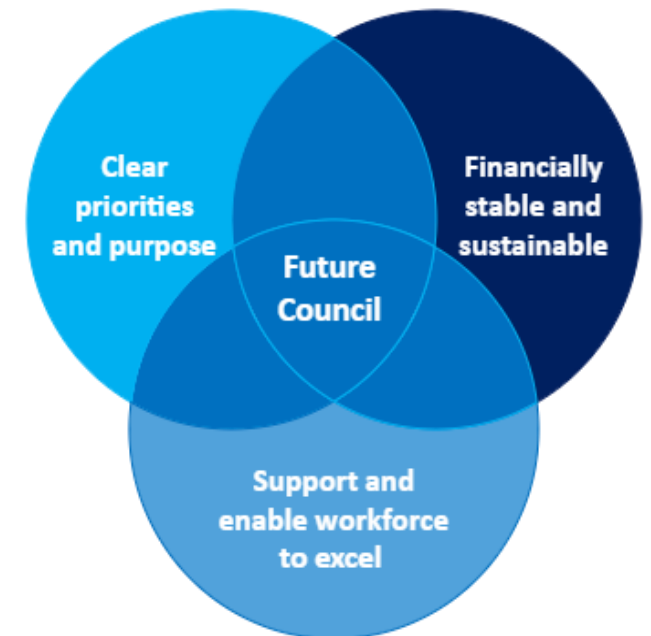
Digital Programme

A programme of initiatives and developments to modernise our services, improve operational efficiency, and better serve our residents and stakeholders, building on the Digital Customer programme, reviewing and reprioritising planned initiatives, and the implementation of a new intranet. At the heart of the programme is an ambition to provide simpler, efficient, secure, predictive, data-led services, that cost less to deliver.

Senior Accountable Officer (SAO)	Executive Director - DPH
Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL):	Service Director – Enabling
Executive Member:	Finance Portfolio Holder

Activity:	Start	End
Review priority areas from opportunity backlogs and discovery work, align to priorities.	Oct 2025	Jan 2026
Establish Chief Digital Information Officer & Digital Transformation Board creating a strong governance model that will ensure accountability, transparency and alignment with statutory obligations, best practice, the DSIT Blueprint and LGA guidance	Oct 2025	Jan 2026
Develop the strategic basis (Digital Strategy, Cyber Strategy, and Data Strategy) to drive the creation of a data-driven, and agile organisation capable of delivering modern, efficient public services.	Oct 2025	Feb 2026
Continue to develop Secure, Resilient Foundations (CAF, PSN, Cyber Exercises)	Oct 2025	July 2027
Web Development (Website migration, Intranet rebuild) delivering visible and impactful change, a strategic hub for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and service delivery, enabling efficiency, compliance, and innovation.	Oct 2025	Mar 2027
Continue to modernise systems with connected platforms so services work together - embracing Automation, AI & Integration (with a focus on the “Top 50” high volume, high cost to service tasks redesigned) - following the Local Digital Declaration and Central Digital and Data Office’s mission for secure, efficient, sustainable technology.	Dec 2025	Ongoing (through to Mar 2029)
Further developed ‘Digital Front Doors’ to deliver user centred inclusive public services, designed around real people, making them easy to use and accessible for everyone, including those who need extra support. This aligns with the Government Design Principles and the Technology Code of Practice.	Jan 2026	Ongoing (through to Mar 2029)
Develop and deliver a programme of Digital Skills, Inclusion and Culture Change that enables confidence we can deliver transformation, build digital skills and capabilities across the council.	Apr 2026	Ongoing (through to Mar 2029)

Appendix 2: Key risks to the delivery of the Plan

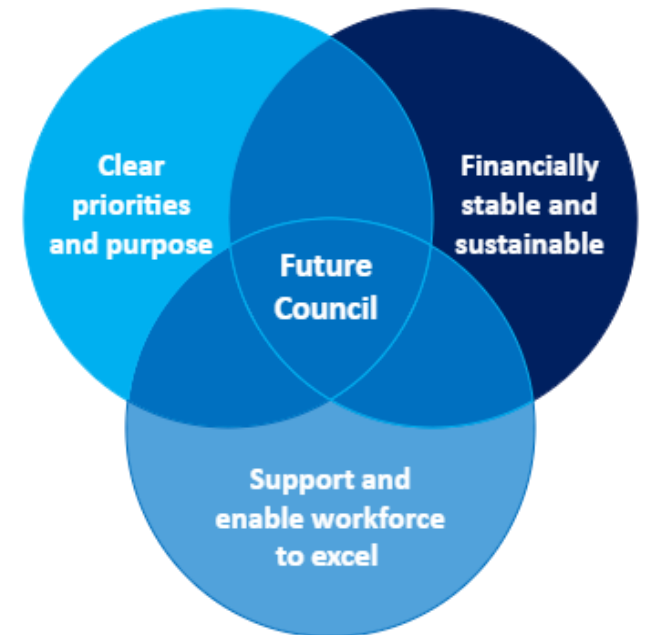


As well as specific programme related risks, there are overarching risks across the whole Improvement Plan which are set out below. These risks will be reviewed regularly by the Leadership Board and Improvement Board:

Risk title	Risk description	Controls and Mitigations
Capacity and pace of delivery	Failure to deliver the improvement plan in a timely and effective manner due to capacity constraints. Delivering the improvement plan needs to be carried out rapidly, achieving significant changes across the Council. This needs to build on changes delivered to date and incorporate new areas of focus and action. As the Council continues to change the way it works to achieve outcomes for local communities within available finances, capacity to implement these changes when it is required is a challenge and a risk.	<p>A comprehensive a robust view of the resourcing requirements to deliver the plan, with reprioritisation and allocation taking place. Confirming and securing capacity in key teams that will be enabling the delivery of the plan.</p> <p>Clear and consistent leadership setting out the direction, pace, outcomes and expectations of the change required.</p> <p>Governance and delivery arrangements that remove siloed working</p> <p>Accountability and responsibility clearly articulated and demonstrated, including through progress and impact reporting</p>
Resourcing the plan	Inability to reallocate and invest in functions to support the delivery of the plan will lead to difficulties in delivering the improvement plan. The Council has been prioritising resources over several years especially to maintain services, particular to vulnerable people. This has needed the reduction of budgets and therefore staffing in other areas of the Council, including council-wide support services. It is recognised that there may need to invest in these services to enable the improvement plan to be realised and contribute to a sustainable council in the future. Failure to align and free up resources to deliver effective change and improvement is a risk.	<p>The Improvement Plan will set out the strategic framework for improvement activity, bringing together the Financial Stability Plan and the Sustainability Strategy, and overall Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).</p> <p>A new Corporate Plan 2026-30 is being developed, and this will take the priorities of the council, alongside the improvement plan and the financial strategy.</p> <p>Specifying and negotiating with MHCLG the amount and use of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) to deliver financial stability through the Improvement Plan and financial sustainability in the medium to longer term.</p>
Understanding and perception of change	Inability to maintain stakeholder confidence leading to reduced support for the improvement plan. There is a risk that residents, partners, members and staff see short-term changes in performance reducing rather than improving as the Council implements the plan.	Clear and timely internal and external communications and engagement that describes the process the Council is going through with open and honest descriptions of current progress while setting out the rationale for change and where the council is aiming to be in the future.
Managing interdependencies across the plan	Failure to manage interdependencies across the improvement plan leading to disruption, duplication or failure in delivering the improvement plan at pace. There are a wide range of interdependencies between the various change programmes in the improvement plan. Without appropriate management of these interdependencies and the sequencing between them there is a risk that delivery of the Plan could be negatively impacted, activity is duplicated, or programmes could become unviable	<p>The need for direct communications between Senior Accountable Officers (SAOs) responsible for the programmes of action has been identified early.</p> <p>Interdependencies between the programmes have been identified and shared.</p> <p>Changes in the performance or scope of change programmes will be communicated via the Improvement Plan governance structures and arrangements.</p> <p>Clear leadership will set out the aims and priorities of the change required.</p> <p>Strengthened Project Management Office (PMO)</p>

Appendix 3: Key Performance Measures

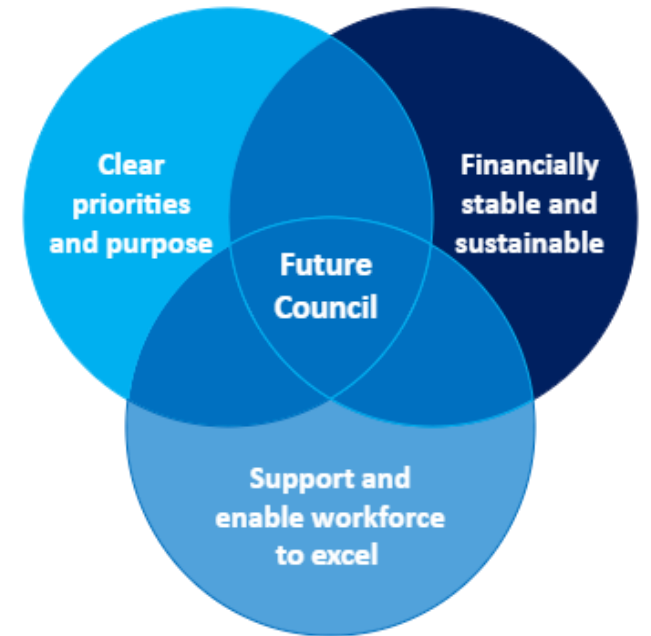
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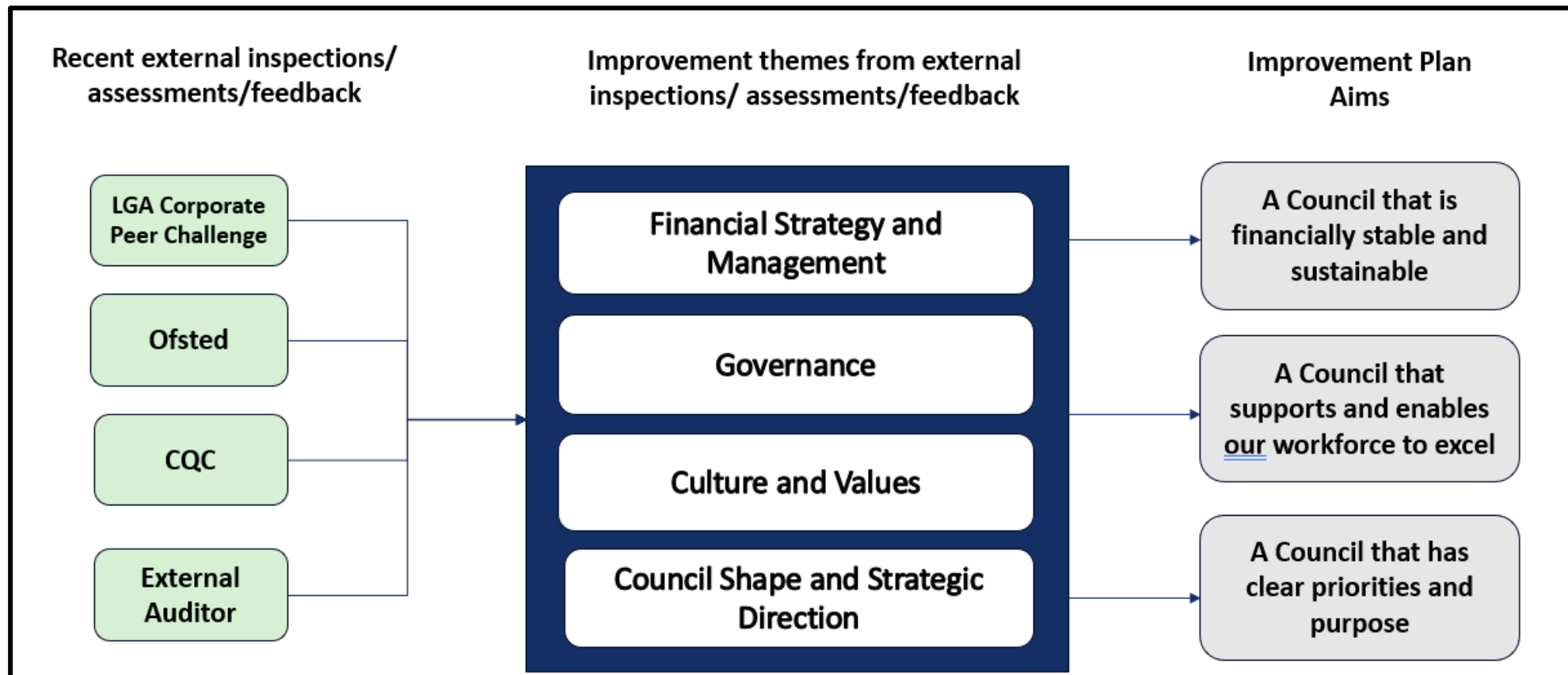
Reporting on delivery and impact of the Improvement Plan will use a combination of deliverables, milestones, key performance indicators (KPIs) and measures. Listed below are a range of KPIs and measures that we intend to use. Some measures need developing and baseline information/position establishing.

Aim	Benefits/Outcomes	KPIs / Measures
Financially Stable and Sustainable	A balanced budget for 2026/27 Improved delivery of savings and income through more robust plans Transformation proposals that deliver financial stability and sustainability Robust financial monitoring, management and accountability A sustainable financial strategy aligning revised service delivery to available financial resources Strengthened procurement and contract management practices	Budget performance KPIs – against profile, underspend/overspend, GFB resilience
		Financial health KPIs – e.g. Levels of reserves, levels of debt, use of EFS over MTFS
		Savings delivery: % of savings plans in place, % savings delivered
		Income against target / Income collection rates
		Completion of revenue budget monitoring by budget holders
Clear priorities and purpose	New plans approved (Corporate Plan and 2050 partnership vision/plan) Increased understanding of council priorities and their roles in delivering them Transformation aligned with corporate plan, improvement plan and financial stability plan More transformation projects delivered on time and within budget Future Council principles guiding delivery, transformation and continuous improvement More collaboration with partners and communities Increased stakeholder confidence and satisfaction Improved public perception of the council	New plans approved: corporate plan 2026-30, Shropshire 2050 partnership plan
		Service delivery plans in place and aligned to Shropshire Plan
		Staff perception and understanding of council priorities and operating principles
		External perceptions of council: (a) Residents (b) partners <i>(to be developed)</i>
		Elected member perceptions of the council <i>(to be developed)</i>
Staff are supported and enabled to excel	Improved staff satisfaction Increased levels of staff engagement Reduced levels of staff absence Increase in compliance performance (FOIs, SARs, Complaints, etc) Increase levels of mandatory training completed Increase numbers of PDPs completed Reduction in number customer complaints More digital enabled services National recognition/awards	Responding to corporate governance recommendations <i>(to be developed)</i>
		Staff sentiment and perceptions (Pulse Surveys)
		Number of FOIs and SARs and performance in responding to them
		Number of: (a) Compliments (b) complaints and performance in responding to them
		Workforce data – including absence, turnover and retention, % of agency staff
		Mandatory training completion: (a) staff and (b) elected members
		% of PDPs completed

Appendix 4: Mapping external recommendations to the Plan



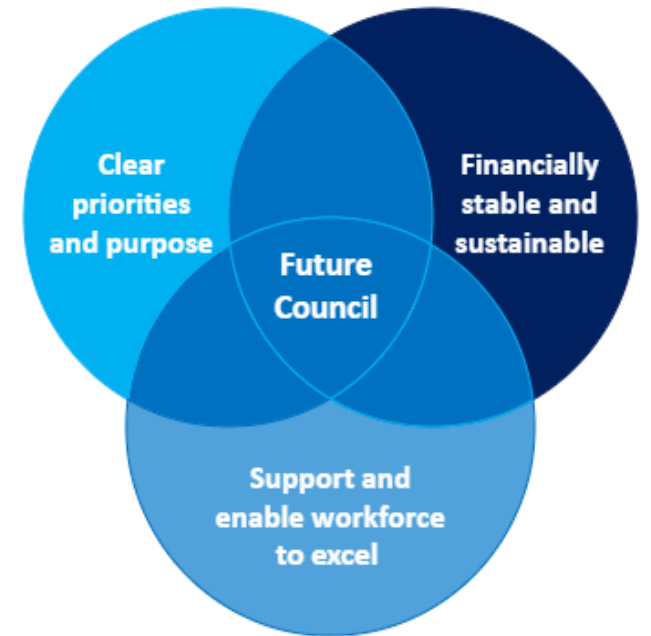
The Improvement Plan has been developed to consolidate the improvement-focused recommendations and key issues to the Council that have been made following external reviews and inspections. Over the past 12 months the council has received reports following the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, Ofsted and CQC inspections of Children’s Social Care and Adult Social Care and the External Auditor. The feedback and recommendations have been used to inform the Improvement Plan aims and priorities. The diagram and the table on the following pages help to illustrate how the Plan responds to them.



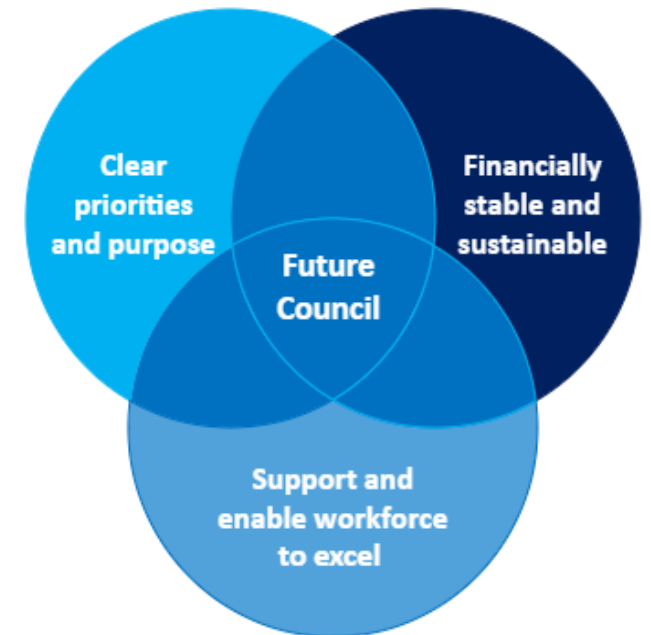
Improvement Aim	Externally identified recommendations/ key issues			
A Council that is financially stable and sustainable	<p>CPC1: Urgently prepare a multi-year plan (MTFS) demonstrating and detailing the council's route to financial and operational stability. Ensure this is realistic, widely understood and shared.</p> <p>Programme 1: Financial stability Programme 2: Financial sustainability strategy</p>	<p>CPC2: Immediately assess and negotiate your EFS requirements for 25/26 and for the period of the MTFS before a s114 notice becomes a necessity.</p> <p>Programme 1: Financial stability Programme 2: Financial sustainability strategy</p>	<p>CPC9: Budget monitoring needs to be focussed on actual spend and projections with clear understanding of one off and recurring expenditure with appropriate intervention and action.</p> <p>Programme 1: Financial stability Programme 3: Strengthening financial management policy & practice</p>	
A Council that supports and enables its staff	<p>CPC3: Quickly implement an externally supported, independently led Improvement Board with CIPFA, a governance expert and LGA peers, preferably with support from MHCLG, to advise, assist and drive urgent changes.</p> <p>Programme 8: Getting the basics right</p>	<p>CPC5: Consider how to urgently reinvigorate your cultural connections and relationships across the workforce – the organisation has become fractured, and the current context has blunted the value of initiatives such as 'Getting It Right'</p> <p>Programme 7 : People Plan</p>	<p>CPC8: Improve the status of and make efforts to drive good governance; consider implementing a 'statutory officers board' or similar mechanism to include the head of paid service, monitoring officer and s151 officer which would consider pressing issues, co-ordinate responses and drive implementation of, for example, internal audit recommendations.</p> <p>Programme 8: Getting the basics right</p>	<p>CPC10: Change your narrative, tell your story and clearly celebrate your success as one council.</p> <p>Programme 7 : People Plan Programme 9: Digital programme</p>
A Council that has clear priorities and purpose	<p>CPC4: Prepare a clear whole council transformation plan that carries the aspirations and narrative for the future council and accurately aligns the resources for delivery. Ensure this is realistic, widely understood and shared</p> <p>Programme 6: Review and realignment of transformation programme</p>	<p>CPC6: Coproduce a new council plan that recognises the financial constraints the council is under and delivers the manifesto commitments. Ensure this is realistic, widely understood, socialised and owned.</p> <p>Programme 4: Corporate Plan 2026-30 Programme 5: Future council</p>	<p>CPC7: Improve the visibility of managerial and political leaders to help make the organisation legible for colleagues at a time of great change.</p> <p>Programme 7 : People Plan Programme 9: Digital programme</p>	

Improvement Aim	Externally identified recommendations/ key issues			
<p>A Council that is financially stable and sustainable</p> <p>Page 64</p>	<p>EA SR1: The Council should: continue, at pace, the action taken to address the financial challenges it faces. In addition, the Council should undertake an immediate review of all service, both statutory and non-statutory, and identify the cost of minimum viable service provision. This will enable the Council to understand the scale of its structural deficit between the cost of service and the income available to the Council. This action should give the Council an understanding of immediate decisions and savings that can be delivered, replicating actions that would be taken were the Council to issue a Section 114 Notice. The Council develop a realistic and deliverable plan over the medium term as to how Exceptional Financial Support will support the increase in financial resilience, and how the Council will reduce reliance on this support to reach a financially sustainable position. Exceptional Financial Support should be temporary in nature, and the Council needs to clearly articulate the plan for reaching a financially sustainable position without undue reliance on temporary sources of support. The Council should also immediately action the recommendations raised in the Internal Audit review and report to Audit and Governance Committee on the progress of addressing the recommendations to avoid a similar situation occurring again in the future.</p> <p>Programme 1: Financial stability Programme 2: Financial sustainability strategy</p>	<p>EA KR1: The Council should: review all savings programmes to scrutinise deliverability and ensure that, when setting the budget for 2026/27 the savings programmes included are deliverable and achievable.</p> <p>Programme 1: Financial stability Programme 2: Financial sustainability strategy Programme 3: Strengthening financial management policy & practice</p> <p>(link to full report and recommendation wording – EAAR 2024/25)</p>	<p>EA KR2: The Council should: continue to drive forward activity that seeks to mitigate the growth of the DSG deficit whilst continuing to engage through the Schools Forum on the management plan in place.</p> <p>Programme 1: Financial stability Programme 2: Financial sustainability strategy Programme 3: Strengthening financial management policy & practice</p>	<p>EA IR1: The Council should: review its approach to reporting on slippage against the capital programme and, as appropriate, enhance the detail of reporting.</p> <p>Programme 2: Financial sustainability strategy Programme 3: Strengthening financial management policy & practice</p>
<p>A Council that supports and enables its staff</p>	<p>EA KR3: The Council should: immediately create an action plan as to how to address the pervasive issues across the Council that are contributing to the “Limited Assurance” opinion from the Head of Policy and Governance (Internal Audit).</p> <p>Programme 8: Getting the basics right</p>	<p>EA IR2: The Council should – develop a clear action plan for addressing the recommendations raised in the Corporate Peer Review.</p>		

Appendix 5: Glossary of Terms



Term	Definition
Local Government Association (LGA)	The national membership body for councils in England and Wales. Its main role is to represent and support councils, acting as the voice of local government to national government and other stakeholders
Care Quality Commission (CQC)	The independent regulator of health and adult social care services in England. Its main purpose is to ensure that care provided is safe, effective, compassionate, and high quality
Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)	The non-ministerial department of the UK Government responsible for inspecting and regulating services that care for children and young people, as well as those providing education and skills training
External Auditor	An external auditor for councils is an independent audit professional or firm appointed to review and provide assurance on a council's financial statements and arrangements for securing value for money. In Shropshire, the appointed external auditor is Grant Thornton
Best Value	A statutory requirement under the Local Government Act 1999. It requires councils to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which their functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness
Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)	An independent body in England that investigates complaints about councils, adult social care providers, and certain other public services
General Fund Balances and Reserves	Funds held by councils as a mitigation against the risk of unknown or unexpected financial pressures
Programme Management Office (PMO)	A function or team within an organisation that provides governance, standards, and support for managing programmes and projects
Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)	Temporary financial assistance provided by the UK Government to councils facing severe financial difficulties
Third Party Spend	Refers to the money the Council spends on goods and services provided by external suppliers or contractors rather than produced internally.
Strategic Operating Model	A high-level framework that defines how an organisation delivers its strategy through its structure, processes, technology, and people
Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)	The independent body in England responsible for regulating registered providers of social housing, such as housing associations and councils
Local Government Outcomes Framework (LGOF)	A national framework that sets priority outcomes for local authorities and measures progress using agreed metrics
SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)	Children and young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn compared to most others of the same age
Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS)	An independent, national body that supports councils and other public bodies to improve governance, accountability, and scrutiny practices.
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)	The UK Government department responsible for housing policy, local government oversight, community development, and planning
CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy)	A professional accountancy body that provides qualifications, training, and guidance and sets accounting standards for councils



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Committee and Date:
Council 11 December
2025

Item

Public



People Plan

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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Heather Kidd		

1. Synopsis

The Shropshire Council People Plan is a comprehensive roadmap for developing a high-performing, inclusive, and sustainable workforce. It is central to achieving the Council's vision for the future, supporting the workforce, and delivering the outcomes set out in the Improvement Plan and forthcoming Corporate Plan as part of the one Shropshire Plan.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 In July 2025 the LGA carried out a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) at the invitation of the Council. The peer challenge identified 10 recommendations and a number of additional opportunities for the council to address and recognise the challenging financial position of the council. The recommendations, which were all accepted, included those which recognised the need to be a Council that improves how we support and enable our workforce to deliver. The Council want every member of our team to feel valued and supported as we move forward together.

2.2 In response to this external feedback and the declaration of the Financial Emergency, the Council has taken immediate action to address the issues raised. This has included an action plan responding to the recommendations from the CPC

(reported to Cabinet on the 15 October 2025) including developing The People Plan and Improvement Plan.

2.3 This paper presents the draft People Plan (appendix 1) for consideration, feedback and approval. The plan is not a detailed delivery plan. It is designed to be a single framework and plan for the Councils workforce improvement activity, setting out the governance and support arrangements that will ensure that the council delivers the people plan, consolidating existing and new activity and actions that will enable strong foundations to enable the organisation to deliver its outcomes.

2.4 This plan recognises the dedication and resilience of our staff, and this plan is shaped with our staff's wellbeing and growth at its heart. The people plan sets out Shropshire Council's ambition to be an employer of choice—where staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to excel. It is a five-year, living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated to remain relevant to the Council's evolving needs and external factors, including national agendas for change. The Plan is a key pillar of the Council's wider Improvement Plan and forthcoming Corporate Plan, ensuring that people, culture, and organisational development are at the heart of delivering excellent services to our residents and community.

2.5 The Plan is structured around five interconnected aims, each critical to the Council's transformation and future success. These aims reflect our shared hopes for a workplace where everyone can excel:

- **Culture:** Shaping and embedding a positive, inclusive culture that reflects organisational values, promotes collaboration, diversity, and innovation, and empowers staff to make a difference.
- **Leadership & Talent:** Developing leadership at all levels, ensuring the right skills, behaviours, and mindset to drive improvement and support staff.
- **Capability & Capacity:** Identifying and addressing current and future workforce needs through targeted recruitment, retention, and development strategies.
- **Performance:** Implementing a transparent performance management framework that aligns individual and team objectives with organisational goals.
- **Systems & Establishment:** Streamlining systems and processes to support effective, efficient service delivery and organisational sustainability.

2.6 The Plan outlines a series of programmes and actions, including:

- Disseminating and embedding the People Plan and Shropshire Values across the organisation, ensuring that all staff and Members adhere to these principles. These values will be fully incorporated into our competency and behaviour framework and practices, with measurable outcomes assessed against them.
- Developing a comprehensive communications and engagement plan, including regular staff engagement, Pulse survey's, CE Update's and monthly Senior

leadership Forums. Engagement and coproduction are at the heart of making the Council of the future achieve its ambitions.

- We look forward to celebrating staff and community achievements and milestones, recognising the difference staff make every day.
- Update and deliver an organisational wide Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB) Plan.
- Conducting workforce skills audits and launching targeted training, especially in digital and data skills.
- The wellbeing of our staff is a priority, and we are committed to listening and responding to what matters most to staff.
- Introducing a new performance management framework and council-wide performance dashboard, including appraisal/good conversations monitoring.
- Regularly measuring progress through key performance indicators (KPIs) such as staff satisfaction, retention, diversity, engagement, and training uptake.

2.7 The People Plan has been developed with a clear eye on the future council. The Council has previously considered how it needs to adopt new ways of working to deliver its aims while being a financially sustainable organisation. The plan has been coproduced with Senior Leadership Forum, Staff including post pulse survey staff engagement sessions and regular development conversations with Leadership Board and discussions with cabinet. The Plan builds on and has been directly developed in response to surveys, events and feedback from external reports and recommendations (page 6 provides more detail). The Plan places strong emphasis on culture change—building trust, encouraging innovation, and motivating staff to do their best. We want every member of our team to feel valued and supported as we move forward together. It commits to open communication, regular feedback, celebrating achievements, and supporting staff wellbeing and career development. The Council will foster an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and able to contribute to organisational values and goals.

2.8 Delivery of the Plan will be overseen by a dedicated People Change Board, reporting to the Leadership Board and Cabinet, with robust governance, risk management, and regular progress reporting. The Plan is designed to be collaborative, with ongoing engagement and feedback from staff at all levels.

2.9 The People Plan is fully aligned with the Council's Improvement Plan, also being presented at Cabinet (03-12-2025) for consideration. Together, these documents provide a clear direction for the Council's modernisation, improvement, financial sustainability, and delivery of better outcomes for Shropshire's residents. The People Plan ensures that the workforce is equipped, motivated, and supported to deliver on these ambitions.

2.10 The Shropshire Council People Plan is a comprehensive roadmap for developing a high-performing, inclusive, and sustainable workforce. It is central to achieving the

Council's vision for the future, supporting staff to do their very best, and delivering the outcomes set out in the Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Consider and agree the draft People Plan (Appendix 1).
 3.2 Agree the governance arrangements and key actions set out in the Plan.
 4. 3.3 Agree the capacity and resources necessary to support the delivery of organisational change and development, are aligned with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to ensure effective and sustainable implementation

Report

5. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

We understand that change can be unsettling, and we will support our staff through every step.

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Response</i>
Capacity and pace of delivery - Failure to deliver the improvement plan in a timely and effective manner due to capacity constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A comprehensive a robust view of the resourcing requirements to deliver the plan, with reprioritisation and allocation taking place. <input type="checkbox"/> Clear and consistent leadership setting out the direction, pace, outcomes and expectations of the change required. <input type="checkbox"/> Governance and delivery arrangements that remove siloed working <input type="checkbox"/> Accountability and responsibility clearly articulated and demonstrated, including through progress and impact reporting
Resourcing the plan - Inability to reallocate and invest in functions to support the delivery of the plan will lead to difficulties in delivering the People Plan	<p>The delivery approach for the People Plan will set out the strategic framework which workforce activity will be delivered within, bringing together the Improvement Plan and the Sustainability Strategy, with the MTFS.</p> <p>A new Corporate Plan is being developed, and this will take the priorities of the council, alongside the People Plan, improvement plan and the financial strategy.</p>

	Specifying and negotiating with MHCLG the amount and use of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) to deliver financial stability through the Improvement Plan, supported by the People Plan and financial sustainability in the medium to longer term
Understanding and perception of change - Inability to maintain stakeholder confidence leading to reduced support for the people plan	Clear and timely internal and external communications and engagement that describes the process the Council is going through with open and honest descriptions of current progress while setting out the rationale for change and where the council is aiming to be in the future.
Managing interdependencies across the plan - Failure to manage interdependencies across the people plan leading to disruption, duplication or failure in delivering the people plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The need for direct communications between Senior Accountable Officer, SAOs responsible for the programmes of action has been identified early. <input type="checkbox"/> Interdependencies between the programmes have been identified and shared within the action plans, for example performance monitoring and training cut across delivery of several priorities and plans. <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in the performance or scope of change programmes will be communicated via the proposed governance structure. <input type="checkbox"/> Clear leadership will set out the aims and priorities of the change required. <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthened Organisational Development Functions and Programme Management Office (PMO)

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands and a financial emergency was declared by Cabinet on 10 September 2025. The overall financial position of the Council is set out in the monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. While we must make difficult decisions, we remain committed to open communication and supporting our staff through these changes. Significant management action has been instigated at all levels of the Council reducing spend to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all reports to Members provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers and/or Portfolio Holders review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. All non-essential spend will be stopped and all essential spend challenged. These actions may involve (this is not exhaustive):

- scaling down initiatives,
- changing the scope of activities,
- delaying implementation of agreed plans, or
- extending delivery timescales.

6.2. The initial costs associated with the development of the People Change Board and the creation of a People Plan have been met internally.

6.3. The calculation and confirmation of the resources required to implement the People Plan and what is required to realise financial sustainability into the future is taking place. Delivering the plan will require the council to reprioritise resources to achieve the necessary change and include identifying where investment will be needed. This will need to be reflected in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

7. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1 Whilst this report and the Plan do not present options and recommendations that directly impact on climate change, the decisions that need to be taken and the actions that will need to take place to deliver financial sustainability and the priorities and outcomes of the council are likely to have impacts.

Opportunities to decarbonise the provision of services and increase energy efficiency of council assets may require some capital investment but will realise financial benefits e.g. through reducing energy usage, or through the generation of energy on council assets that either bring costs down or can generate income.

Climate change appraisals will need to be undertaken as appropriate for each project and approach that is developed to ensure that opportunities are identified and pursued, and that any 'invest to save' opportunities are investigated and fully evidenced to ensure that these can be taken into account in decision making.

8. Background

8.1. The People Plan sets out how Shropshire Council develop a high-performing, inclusive, and sustainable workforce. Delivering the people plan will provide assurance to residents, Members, staff, and partners that the council is improving how it operates and performs.

7.2 The People Plan is not a detailed delivery plan. It acts as an overarching framework for the council's workforce improvement activity, which is aligned to five aims. The aims and initial priority programmes of action in the plan sit beneath these five aims and provide the basis of our plan for the next 5 years but also summarised activity and priority programmes of action within the next 12 months aligned to the improvement plan. Although the aims and programmes are set out in a table (see below), there is no hierarchy or sequencing behind where they are located, as they should be seen as interdependent elements of the Plan. They provide a basis for governance and performance reporting. The programmes vary in size, scale and complexity, and not all have been fully developed.

Shropshire Council People Plan: Aims and Programmes

Aim	Related Priority Programmes/Activities
Culture	1. One purpose, underpinned by our values 2. Engagement and communication 3. Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion 4. Valuing and supporting new and existing staff
Leadership & Talent	5. Leadership, visibility, communications and competency framework 6. Leadership and management programme
Capability & Capacity	7. Coaching and mentoring 8. Strategic workforce planning 9. Workforce skills audit
Performance	10. Performance management 11. Apprenticeship strategy
Systems & Establishment	12. Transformation aligned to our aims and priorities 13. Data Insights

7.3 The aims in the plan will provide this timeframe and should form the basis of the council's continuous improvement. The approaches to how they are delivered will need to adjust to changing requirements and the environment the council is operating in.

7.4 In addition to responding to different sources of external feedback including from the CPC, the improvement plan consolidates the different people focused activity of the council into a single plan.

7.5 The following table shares the overall structure of the people plan and provides brief descriptions of what each section covers.

Section	Purpose
Foreword	Foreword by the Interim Chief Executive Developing an effective people plan is one of the most important things to do for the success and growth of our Council, alongside financial stability; the two go hand in hand we need both to make the Council Sustainable in the future
1. Introduction	To give an overview of the purpose and development of the plan and the structure of the plan. It also describes the organisational values and behaviours which drive our culture
2. Our Future Council	To describe how we have developed the plan and how it has aligned to our future Council and one organisational plan

3. Our People Plan Aims and Priorities	This section details our five key aims for the plan and the key priority activity to support these
4. Making sure we deliver	This gives assurance around the governance for delivery recognising this is a live document
Appendix 1: Improvement activity – priority programme summaries	Provides a summary of the activity and actions for each of the improvement aims and priorities including key milestones and the accountable and responsible officers
Appendix 2: Risks	Provides a list of the key risks to delivery of the Plan aligned to the improvement plan
Appendix 3: Key Performance Indicators	Lists the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and measures we will use to demonstrate progress towards the overall aims, also aligned to the improvement plan

7.6 The plan sets out our values for the organisation Our values enable us to work as One Organisation, One Plan and One Place. Underpinning our plan is our commitment to the organisations core values which drive our culture. We'll bring these values into everything we do. This means building strong by good relationships, working together, with respect, creating opportunities, seeking understanding and developing a Can-Do Culture with high standards.

7.7 Changing our culture will take time and everyone's effort. It's not just one goal—it's about all our plan working together to enable Shropshire to flourish. The following image shows our values for our workforce – to be Proud and the behaviours that support these values.

Shropshire Values: PROUD

Our Values: What guides our actions, behaviours and decisions



7.8 Enabling the delivery of the People Plan is a key consideration for the council. This will require some current areas of work to be reduced or paused whilst others are accelerated and introduced. This will mean that resources, both financial and employee, will need to be reprioritised and refocused, and that agreement from Government for the council to access funding via Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) will be required to bridge any current gaps and help close future funding gaps related to the Council being able to deliver the change at pace that needed to become financially sustainable organisation able to deliver its responsibilities, priorities and outcomes for residents and staff.

9. Conclusions

9.1. The People Plan provides the overarching and coherent framework of the council's workforce improvement work for the next five years, highlighting key actions for year one.

9.2. This plan sets out Shropshire Council's ambition to be an employer of choice—where staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to excel. It is a five-year, living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated to remain relevant to the Council's evolving needs. The Plan is a key pillar of the Council's wider Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan, ensuring that people, culture, and organisational development are at the heart of delivering excellent services to our residents and community

Appendices [Please list the titles of Appendices]

Appendix 1: The People Plan

People Plan

**Our Plan to support and enable our
workforce to excel**

2025-2030

November 2025

Draft





In Shropshire our ambition is to become an employer of choice, where people are proud to work for Shropshire Council, feel valued, and can thrive with the right support and development to enable people to perform their best. Our People Plan will enable us to achieve this.

Our People Plan helps us create an enabling “Can Do” culture in a modern, efficient, and sustainable council; transforming how we work to better serve our community.

We are committed to making sure everyone is treated fairly and with respect at work, so all staff can be themselves and feel valued for who they are; we welcome diversity in every form and will meet equality responsibilities, making sure our services are fair and accessible to everyone.

page 81
Developing an effective people plan is one of the most important things to do for the success and growth of our Council, alongside financial stability; the two go hand in hand we need both to make the Council Sustainable in the future.

81
Together, we will establish a stronger and more sustainable ‘can do’ Council, supported by a workforce that embodies our organisational values and is fully prepared to address future challenges and opportunities.



Section	Purpose	Page
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Appendix 3: Key Performance Indicators	Lists the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and measures we will use to demonstrate progress towards the overall aims, also aligned to the improvement plan	

Section 1

Introduction



Purpose of this Plan

Our vision is to create a workforce that is supported and enabled to excel, this in turn will support delivery of our ambition for the Future Council.

Our People Plan outlines how we will turn our ambitions into reality, focusing on practical actions from the perspective of our workforce.

We aim to be an employer of choice, fostering a culture where staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to excel. By embracing a “Can Do” ethos within a modern, efficient, and sustainable council, we will continually improve how we work to deliver outstanding service to our community.

We are committed to making sure everyone is treated fairly and with respect at work, so all staff can be themselves and feel valued for who they are; we welcome diversity in every form and will meet equality responsibilities, making sure our services are fair and accessible to everyone.

This plan brings together the people aspects—such as shaping our culture, values, leadership, and everyday behaviours—with the practical side of how we organise ourselves, develop systems, and establish processes. This ensures our workforce is positioned to work collaboratively, supporting the council’s priorities and helping us fulfil our ambitions.

The need for change & development of the Plan

The People Plan has been developed as a response to several surveys, events, feedback and external reports and recommendations. They reflect external factors and trends, themes within our key strategic plans, and internal challenges we face, including:

- Pulse and Employee Surveys
- Getting Leadership Right
- Employment Engagement Forum
- The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge
- Engagement Sessions and Focus Groups
- Surveys and Staff Feedback through Webinars, Q&A
- Informal Cabinet,
- Senior Leadership Forum
- By evidence from directorate workforce planning
- The Strategic Review of Organisational Development
- ,Local Government Association (LGA)
- Workforce data and
- The learning derived from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moving forward we will continue to check our progress regularly with surveys and feedback sessions, listening to everyone’s views to keep improving (see appendices)

Getting it right

Delivering the goals of Our People Plan describes and offers the strong commitment we make to our staff in response to their contributions to our Future Council. A strong employee promise is important to ensure we focus on what’s important:

- **Attracting Talent:** It helps bring in skilled people by showing why our council is a good choice.
- **Keeping Staff:** It encourages employees to stay, making them feel valued and part of the team.
- **Boosting Engagement:** When staff believe in what we offer, they are more motivated and productive.
- **Culture Change:** It supports positive changes in how we work and strengthens our values.
- **Clear Communication:** It sets clear expectations, building trust and transparency.
- **Business Success:** Happy and engaged staff help us achieve better results.

Structure of this Plan This document will guide you through the 5-year plan. It lays out how we aim to build a Council that values its residents and staff, delivers services with pride and respect and operates with transparency and financial discipline.

This plan is part of our wider Improvement Plan ([link here](#)).

Our People Plan is a 5-year, living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated through ongoing collaboration and feedback, ensuring it remains relevant to our evolving needs.

Shropshire Values: PROUD

Our Values: What guides our actions, behaviours and decisions

Our values enable us to work as One Organisation, One Plan and One Place.

Underpinning our plan is our commitment to the organisations core values which drive our culture.

We'll bring these values into everything we do. This means building strong partnerships, developed by good relationships, working together, with respect, creating opportunities, seeking understanding and developing a Can-Do Culture with high standards.

Leaders will help us innovate and grow and supporting new ideas and drive transformation. We'll encourage open conversations, give regular feedback, and celebrate when things go well. Training, development and clear communication will help everyone understand and live our values.

Changing our culture will take time and everyone's effort. It's not just one goal—it's about all our plan working together to enable Shropshire to flourish.



Partnerships

We recognise the importance of partnerships and are committed to fostering collaborative relationships, working closely with others to achieve shared goals.

- One Organisation
- Working Together
- Public Service
- High standards
- Lead by example
- Staff Engagement
- Clarity and Transparency



Respect

Valuing every person, listening openly, working as one team, and challenging ideas with kindness. We foster inclusion and keep our promises to build a positive environment for all.

- One team
- Listen
- Challenge with Warmth
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging
- Deliver on Promises
- Environment



Opportunities

We believe in creating opportunities for all, supporting learning, innovation, and growth. By enabling change and growth we strengthen what we do.

- Learning Organisation
- Encourage Innovation
- Drive Quality
- Embrace curiosity
- Be Open to Change
- Offer and seek feedback
- Enable Opportunities for Residents



Understanding

Understanding is at the heart of how we serve Shropshire, our residents, and our workforce.

- One Vision
- One Plan
- Clarity of Expectations
- Communicate Openly
- Enabling Communities though Understanding
- Understand the bigger picture



can Do

We foster a can-do attitude by proactively finding solutions, empowering others, removing barriers, driving positive change, taking responsibility, acting quickly, and celebrating success.

- Be a Can Do Council
- Enabling approaches
- How Can We Help
- Take responsibility for actions
- Be Proactive
- Respond quickly
- Celebrate Success

Our Workforce

3,418 Employees and 3,492 Posts (Nov 2025)
Down from 3,639 (2023/24)

Full Time Equivalent 2,860 (Nov 2025)

Starters and Leavers

1237 in 2024/25 729 in 2024/25
455 financial year to date and 382
leavers

**Disability 12% of
employees have declared
a disability**
We have disability data for 28%
of staff

Average Age

47.13 years

Gender diversity

Female 2549
Male 869

**Full Time Equivalent
(FTE)**

57.72% Full Time
42.42% Part Time

Religion:

Religion % of Headcount

Buddhist	0.3%
Christian	39.8%
Hindu	0%
Jewish	0%
Muslim	0.3%
No religion	35.3%
Other religion	1.3%
Prefer not to say	3.3%
Sikh	0.3%
Unknown	19.4%

Ethnicity:

Ethnicity % of Headcount

Asian or Asian British	2%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	1%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1%
Other ethnic group	0%
Prefer not to say	1%
Unknown	11%
White	85%

Sickness

Days lost 30,830 2024/25
estimated 2.81m cost:

Top 3 Reasons
Anxiety and Stress
Cold Cough and Flu

**321 Applicants current and
previous for apprentices
since 2017**

Improvement Board

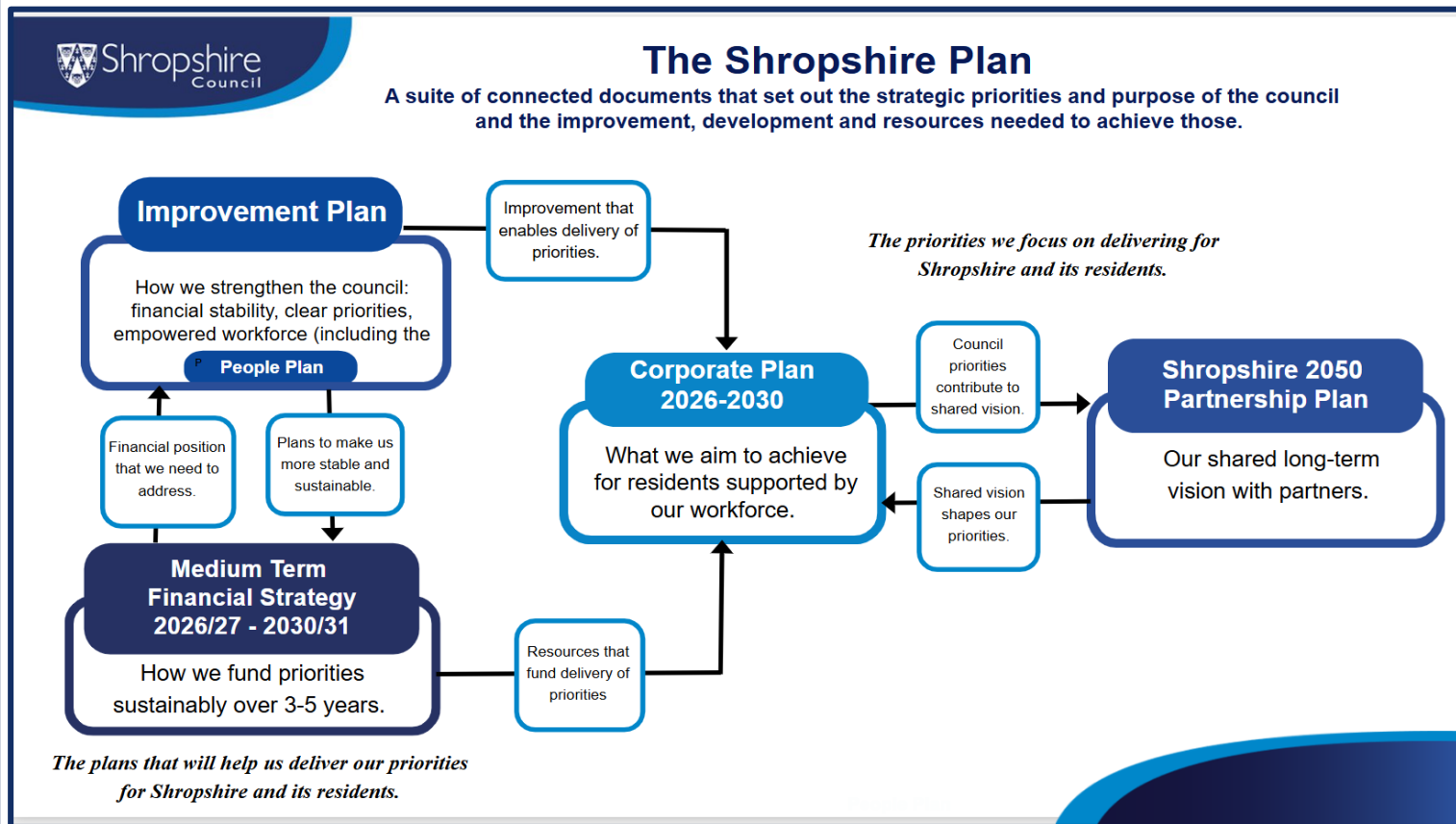
One of the key recommendations from the LGA Peer Challenge was to establish an independently chaired **Improvement Board**. This Board met for its inaugural meeting on 10th November 2025 and will continue to provide external advice, challenge, and expertise to the Council in driving forward the delivery of this Improvement Plan.

Relationship with other strategic plans

The Improvement Plan sits alongside other plans (see **Figure 1**) to provide an overall framework for the continued improvement of the Council. Together they provide a suite of connected documents that set out the strategic priorities and purpose of the council and the improvement, change and resources needed to achieve those:

- **The Improvement Plan** Sets out our priorities for improving the Council and summarises the plans for achieving *financial stability*, developing clear priorities, and supporting a workforce that excels (through a *People Plan*)
- **The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27-2030/31** Summarises the Council's overall financial position, including forecasts, pressures and risks, over the medium-term, and how we will fund priorities.

Figure 1: Shropshire Plan



- **The Corporate Plan 2026-2030:** Informed by the 'New Direction' ambitions, the Plan will set out the priorities the council will focus on to deliver, enable, and influence better outcomes for Shropshire and its residents.
- **The Shropshire 2050 Partnership Plan:** Sets out the longer-term shared vision and priorities for the county (as a place) that the council has agreed with partners.

Section 2

Our Future Council



Whether our role as a Council is delivering, enabling or influencing outcomes, we will be committed to creating a focused, energised and ‘*can do*’ organisation that:

- Provides **clear and visible leadership** from our officer Leadership Board and Cabinet to make our priorities for delivery and change clear for everyone.
- Adopts a ‘**One Council**’ approach, prioritising joined up working internally and externally.
- Ensures our workforce is supported and enabled to excel and has a relentless focus on **performance and continuous improvement**.
- Operates **good governance** to ensure compliance with statutory standards and requirements.
- Delivers value for money through high standards of **financial discipline and management**, and a commercial mindset to make every pound count and every minute matter.
- Provides **good customer service** that gives people a consistent and positive experience when they contact and interact with the Council.
- Continues to **engage with our residents** about the changes we need to make – and ensure our priorities are informed by what is most important to them.
- Is a **learning council** that regularly asks for feedback, learns from complaints, and seeks external challenge and review. We will learn from other councils about what they do differently and how they have improved.

Transforming into the council we want to be: Our Future Council

It is critical that the Council has a clear direction for its future and its further transformation, financial stability and delivery of policy priorities. The **principles** in figure 2 (below) will guide how we work and provide a basis for our continued improvement and transformation into a best value council that is financially sustainable and equipped to deliver, enable, and influence for Shropshire and its residents in the most effective, efficient and economical way:

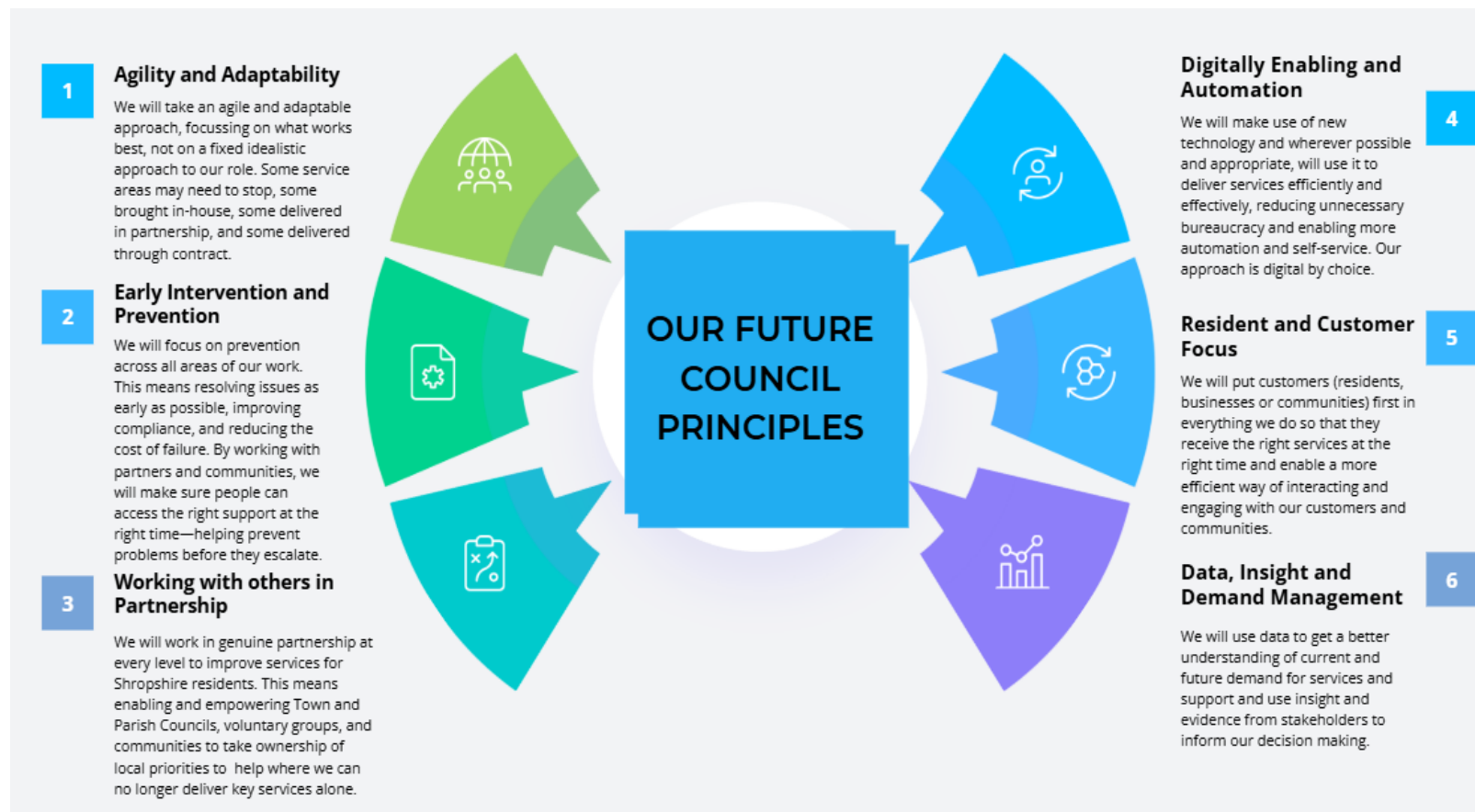


Figure 2: principles that guide how we will operate, improve and transform

A clear direction and the People Plan

Developing an effective people plan is one of the most important things to do for the success and growth of our Council, as a key pillar of our improvement plan alongside financial sustainability and having a clear priority and purpose.

Culture change

Achieving our aims will require changes in our organisational culture, as well as improvements in policy, practice and statutory compliance. The Council needs a positive and inclusive culture, where there are clear roles, responsibilities and expectations of elected members and staff. This will be critical to the Council being member-led, officer-run and resident focused.

Many of the priority programmes of action will support and enable culture change – particularly those that are focused on supporting and enabling our workforce to excel. This is brought together in our People Plan

We will further develop how people are engaged and involved in developing policies and improving services, ensuring that there are more opportunities to inform and shape how we do, and improve, things.

The Plan also focusses on improving our corporate governance and a culture compliance, and how some of our internal services and systems can better support people to do their jobs, so we operate more efficiently and effectively, and barriers and constraints to a high-performing culture are removed.



Section 3

Our People Aims & Priorities



Our People Plan

This People Plan supports how we will ensure we are a 'best value' authority that delivers, enables, and influences for Shropshire and its residents through a workforce that is supported and enabled to excel.

To achieve this, we need to deliver on the following five priority areas :

Our Culture:

We will shape and embed a culture that reflects our values and way of working, promotes collaboration, diversity, inclusion and innovation, and empowers our people to make a difference. Everything we do through strong **engagement and communications**.

Leadership & Talent:

Will be developed and supported throughout the whole organisation, ensuring we have the right skills, behaviours and mindset to get leadership and enabling in all we do.

Capability and Capacity: We will Identify and address the current and future capability and capacity needs of the organisation. Align our recruitment, retention and development strategies that enable our staff to grow and excel in their roles.

Performance:

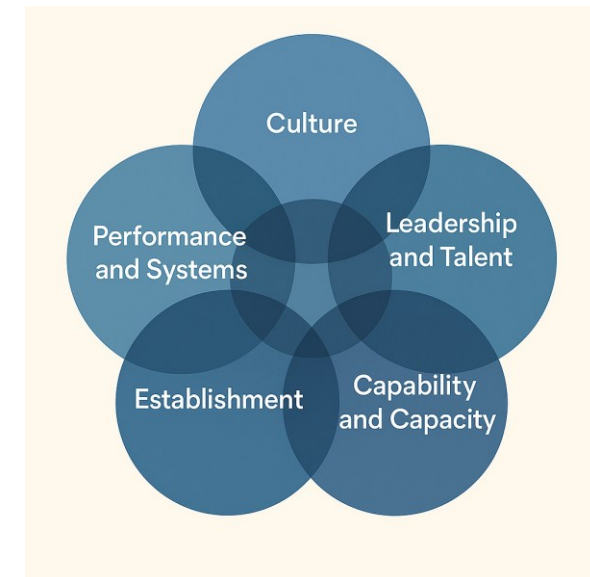
We will establish and implement a consistent and transparent performance management framework that aligns individual and team objectives with the organisational goals, priorities and service plans.

Systems and establishment:

We will continually review and streamline our organisation, systems and processes to ensure they support the way of working effectively and that services and activities are delivered to our residents in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Our Improvement Aims & Priorities

These priorities do overlap and interlink and all are critical to our improvement and development towards the council we want to become.



People Plan priorities and programmes on One Page

To achieve these aims, the People Plan has set out its key priorities and following consultation is focused on an initial set of *Priority Programmes of Action*

Programmes and projects are aligned to a single Plan priority for governance purposes, but most are interdependent, and the outcomes will be cross-cutting and contribute to all five priorities and the improvement and corporate plan priorities. All programmes of action aim to make the Council more financially and operationally sustainable, and support its workforce to excel.

Some programmes are a continuation of current and planned work (e.g. GLR Pulse, EDI), while others need to be fully scoped and their activities defined. For example, xxx

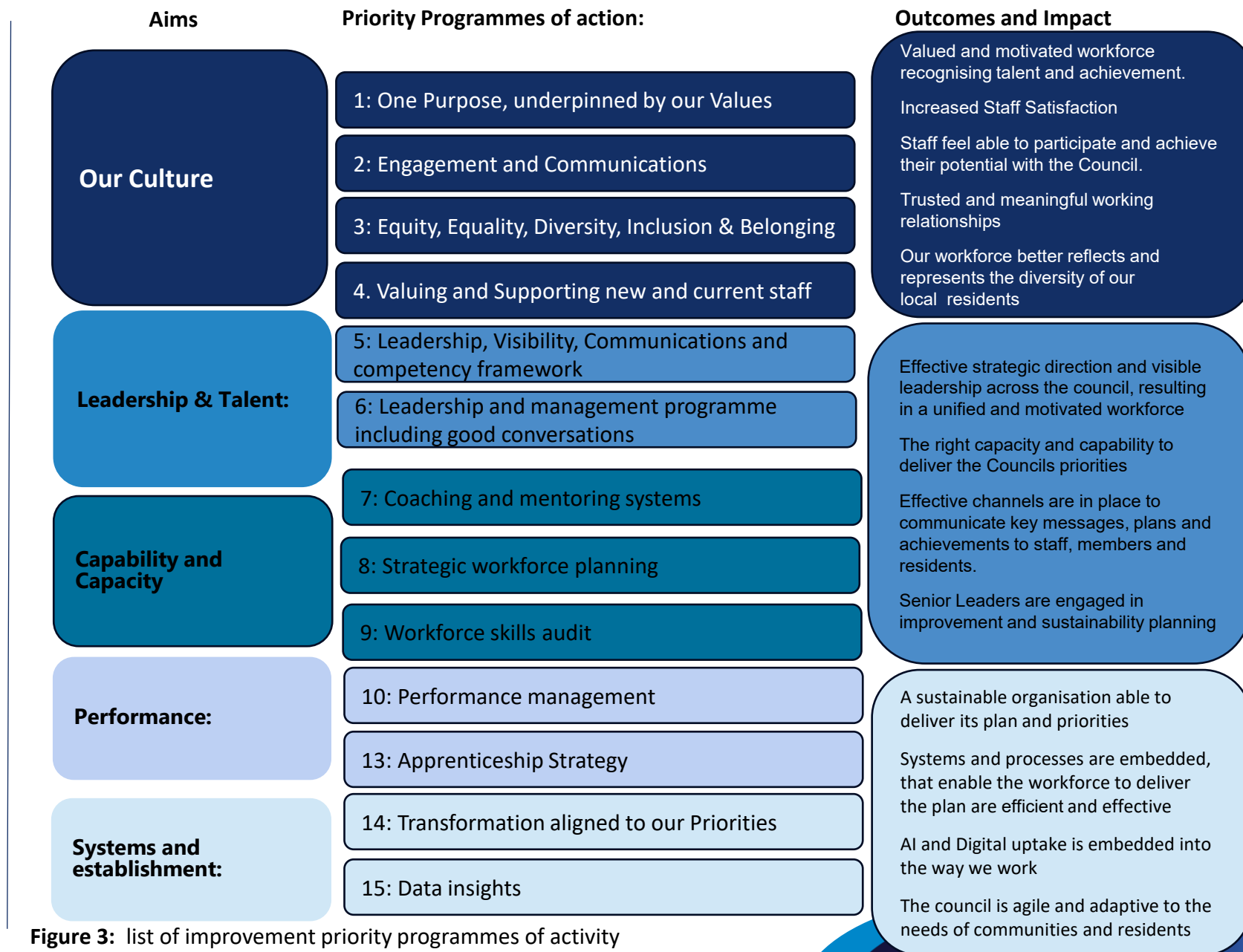


Figure 3: list of improvement priority programmes of activity

Priority programmes of action:

Outcomes and Impact:

Our Culture

- 1: One Purpose, underpinned by our Values
- 2: Engagement and Communications
- 3: Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging
- 4. Valuing and Supporting new and current staff

- Publish Our People Plan
- Embed Shropshire Values and Principles across the organisation including into Service Plans
- Development of a Communications and Engagement Plan for the whole organisation – One Story including; 1/4tly Q&A Webinars with Tanya and Heather Weekly to Monthly Senior Leadership Forums Intranet, redesign staff engagement group, clear priorities and messaging for staff and celebration of success
- Update and deliver pprioritises developing an organisational wide Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB) Plan
- Develop a meaningful OD&D data dash to report on KPI's and monitor performance
- Review the Well-being offer and valuing and supporting staff (see below)

Leadership & Talent:

- 6: Leadership and management programme including good conversations

- Develop and roll out the role of the Manager Programme
- Deliver the Appraisal/ Good conversations Framework
- Regular meaningful team meetings across all Service Areas

Capability and Capacity

- 11: Workforce skills audit

- Develop a Data and Digital skills programme to deliver across the workforce
- Roll out AAA: Customer service approach training
- Ensure we are supporting our staff through training and ongoing CPD
- Celebrating success and recognising and growing talent
- Filling immediate capacity gaps identified in CPC/Improvement Plan

Performance:

- 12: Performance management framework

- Develop and deliver the new Performance Framework, key metrics for good governance and embed across the workforce eg. FOI's, Audits
- Celebrate our successes (see above)

Systems and establishment:

- 14: Transformation aligned to Our Priorities

- Review all transformation programmes and agree priorities and de-prioritisation (see improvement plan)

Aim: Our Culture is vital because it shapes how we (our people) work together, make decisions, and respond to challenges. A positive culture builds trust, encourages innovation, and motivates staff to do their best. When values guide behaviour, teams collaborate more effectively and adapt to change, driving the organisation towards its goals and long-term success.

The focus of this priority is:

- Clear Purpose and Vision
- Strong Core Values
- Open, Strong and Collaborative Communication and Engagement
- Prioritise Organisation Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB)

Outcomes and Benefits (the things that will tell us we are achieving our priority):

- A workplace where everyone feels valued and motivated
- Increased Staff Satisfaction Rates
- Staff feel able to participate and achieve their potential with the Council.
- Trusted and meaningful working relationships are in place across the Council
- Our workforce better reflects and represents the diversity of our local residents.

The key programmes of action that will deliver this improvement and change are:

Programme/Action	Description and Purpose
One purpose underpinned by our values	One clear purpose and vision will guide everyone towards a common goal. Strong core values will shape our behaviour, ways of working and decisions. We will embed our values into everything we do. This means building good relationships, working together, and aiming for high standards. Leaders will help us grow and support new ideas. We'll encourage open conversations, give regular feedback, and celebrate when things go well. Training and support will help everyone turn our values into a way of being, which will support high levels of employee, customer, partner, and community satisfaction.
Engagement and Communication	Engagement and collaboration is key to delivering our ambitions for a future Council. Our People understand the work we do and they hold the solutions to the challenges we face. We aim to engage with staff throughout our improvement planning through a variety of methods, including surveys, face to face meetings and the development of online communities and 1-1s Good Conversations are a priority as is improving our intranet. Employee engagement will be a regular topic for our leaders. The Council will work closely with trade unions to support staff, ensure their voices are heard, and make sure that the offer to staff is fair and transparent, with clear accountability throughout the process. We'll check our progress regularly with surveys and feedback sessions, listening to everyone's views to keep improving. A clear communications strategy will be central to this work and the success of Our People Plan and Improvement Plan.
Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB)	Prioritise developing an organisational wide Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB) Plan that integrates EEDIB across all elements of our system, e.g., recruitment, L&D, engagement, policies and service design. This will provide us with a holistic, meaningful and impactful approach to developing EEDIB within our organisation. As part of our plan we will use data and performance indicators to ensure that there is equity of both opportunity and outcomes for individuals
Valuing and Supporting New and Current Staff	We want our staff to feel positive, supported, and valued at every stage of their time with us. This means giving new joiners a warm welcome, checking in often, recognising great work, encouraging teamwork, and helping everyone develop their careers.. New starters will benefit from a smoother introduction, everyone will have access to tailored training and career pathways, and it'll be easier to connect and communicate across the council. Working across the organisation

Aim: Leadership and Talent

Understanding ourselves well is key to developing our workforce, its leadership and talent. Data here will show us, the size of our workforce and where we have focused our efforts to date and where we want to focus our efforts to ensure the best use of our resources to see the best return on investment. We need leaders who can handle complex challenges and encourage new ideas, and we must support this in a cost-effective way. Our GLR Programme (Getting Leadership Right) began this journey for some, but there is still more to do. Everyone leads in some way, so it's important that all staff have leadership skills. We cannot achieve our goals without this.

The focus of this priority is:

- Leadership that is visible and communicates effectively
- Leadership and Culture
- Leadership and Performance Management including good conversations
- Getting Management Right: The Role of the Manager

Outcomes and Benefits (the things that will tell us we are achieving our aim):

- Senior officers have the capacity and capability to provide the authority with effective strategic direction
- Senior officers and managers consistently demonstrate effective strategic direction and visible leadership across the council, resulting in a unified and motivated workforce
- Managers will feel confident and competent in their roles, will have the tools and knowledge to do the job and the Council will be high performing, healthy organisation.

The key programmes of action that will deliver this improvement and change are:

Action	Description and Purpose
Leadership, Visibility, Communication and competency framework	Leaders will be more present and accessible, setting a clear example and supporting staff at every level. We are committed to open, honest, and regular communication. Leaders will ensure everyone is informed, listened to, and able to share ideas or concerns. This includes the development of our senior leadership forums for visible open conversations.
Leadership Culture	Leaders will shape a positive, inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and respected. We will work together to build trust, encourage new ideas, and celebrate achievements. We plan to reinvigorate our cultural connections and relationships across the workforce as recommended in the Corporate Peer Challenge. We will update our Leadership Programme to fit our new way of working and make sure it supports both leadership and management. The new approach will involve everyone in the organisation. We will use different methods to deliver this, such as improved digital inductions, playlists and experiences in our new Learning Platform, AI technology for coaching, CPD communities, and Getting Management Right skills.
Leadership and Management Programme: Appraisal/Good conversations and Performance	Leaders will set clear expectations, provide regular feedback, and support staff development. We will recognise good performance and help everyone reach their potential. This will be clear through our development of our good conversations approach. By clearly defining what it means to be a manager here. Managers must understand their role and have the right skills to manage people, budgets, and performance. Currently, not all managers have the tools or knowledge they need, especially in our self-service model. We will provide a Getting Management Right (GMR) programme, that defines the role of the Manager and ensure successful managers who support staff and drive, maintain and sustain high performance.

Aim: Capability and Capacity

We want our organisation to be a place where staff genuinely enjoy coming to work, feel happy in their roles, and know exactly where to find support whenever it's needed. By focusing on Our People, we aim to create an environment that encourages wellbeing, collaboration, and personal growth. We understand that the journey toward becoming a sustainable Council begins with our people.

The focus of this priority is:

- Workforce Skills audit
- Training, development and support including CPD
- Review of Health and wellbeing offer

Outcomes and Benefits (the things that will tell us we are achieving our aim):

- Increased Staff Satisfaction Rates
- Increase in numbers utilities digital aspects
- Improved quality and quantity of good conversations and PDs completed
- Increased levels of wellbeing amongst staff
- Increased use of apprenticeship levy

The key programmes of action that will deliver this improvement and change are:

Action	Description and Purpose
Coaching and Mentoring systems	By nurturing resilience and encouraging innovation, we aim to create an environment where everyone can flourish and contribute to a Council fit for the future. Coaching and mentoring systems, including training and support for staff.
Workforce skills audits and CPD planning	We are committed to being an enabling council, empowering our staff through continuous learning and development. By investing in training including CPD for staff to enable maintenance of professional accreditation, in new technologies and digital self-service, we equip our workforce to work efficiently and deliver excellent service to residents. Regular skills audits help us identify strengths and gaps, ensuring targeted training and effective succession planning. This approach supports confident, capable teams and wise use of resources, underpinning our strategic goals. To enable whole workforce change we will procure a Learning Management/Experience Platform fit for our purpose, that will drive the communication, development, learning and culture for the organisation and wider Partnership.
Provide Support to facilitate Health and Wellbeing	We truly value the wellbeing of our staff and want everyone to feel cared for, supported, and included. Creating a happy, healthy workplace is central to our mission as an employer. We're dedicated to providing guidance, practical resources, and a positive culture where everyone can thrive—both in their work and in their lives outside of work. Whether it's through wellbeing programmes, accessible training, or open lines of communication, we want everyone to know they are respected and valued as individuals. We encourage a spirit of teamwork, kindness, and understanding, to make sure every member of staff feels safe, supported, and able to achieve their best. Together, we'll continue building a workplace where health, happiness, and personal growth are just as important as the services we deliver.

Aim: Performance

Our Shropshire Plan will help us focus on the right priorities, stop activities that don't add value, and break old habits and unnecessary processes or ways of working. This will make us more efficient and better aligned with our goals. And we will engage staff in the development of this work. We will also introduce a clear performance management framework, this will link our strategy to service plans, set clear expectations and measurable targets, and give us real-time data on how we're doing. It will help us quickly spot and fix problems, as well as recognise and reward great work.

The focus of this priority is:

- A clear performance framework
- Clear expectations and measurable targets
- Real time data to monitor progress and quickly address issues and recognise achievements

Outcomes and Benefits (the things that will tell us we are achieving our aim):

- The workforce (service) are managed efficiently and effectively, with clear and credible strategies demonstrating how services will be delivered in the future, with an effective system for performance management.
- A culture of robust performance management and compliance with our values, ways of working, legislation, strategies, policies and procedures throughout the organisation.

The key programmes of action that will deliver this improvement and change are:

Action	Description and Purpose
Performance Management Framework	We will introduce a clear performance management framework. This will link our strategy to service plans, set clear expectations and measurable targets, and give us real-time data on how we're doing. It will help us quickly spot and fix problems, as well as recognise and reward great work. By delivering training to support SMART service planning and delivery aligned to our values, principles and priorities we will drive forwards high standards of performance and excellent outcomes. All services will be able to clearly evidence the progress of plans, to provide assurance on performance, delivery and outcomes. It will be easy for Managers to spot drift and delay in delivery of services or outcomes and address this before it becomes a problem. A balanced performance dashboard that evidences service delivery performance and provides Councillors, stakeholders and residents with clear, robust and meaningful information. With this system, everyone will understand how their work supports our goals, recognise best practice, and share this across the organisation to both celebrate and continuously improve. Leaders will have up-to-date information on our progress. By using data and technology, we will track trends, address issues early, and keep our performance management focused on our main objectives.
Apprenticeship Strategy	A robust apprenticeship strategy ensures that our organisation develops the skills needed for future success. By aligning our skills audit with anticipated organisational needs and demand management, we create targeted opportunities for staff to learn and grow. This approach enables us to build a resilient workforce, address skills gaps proactively, and support sustainable service delivery for the future.

Aim: Systems and Establishment

We are working to make our organisation simpler and easier to run, so we can save money for the long term and deliver our plans more effectively. We know that some changes are needed, so we will look at how we organise our teams and services to make sure our resources are used in the best way and our services have a better impact. A big part of this is bringing in better digital systems, so we do not have to rely so much on manual processes or individual roles. We will use strong governance and good habits, based on our organisation's values, to guide us through these changes. We are committed to being clear and open in our decisions, making sure everyone knows who is responsible for what, and building trust with staff and the community. As we make these changes, we will continue to support our staff, councillors, and residents. We will give you the resources, support, and opportunities you need to adapt and do well during this time, so we can keep serving our community.

The focus of this priority is:

- Strategic Workforce Planning
- Transformation
- AI and digital solutions
- Governance compliance

Outcomes and Benefits (the things that will tell us we are achieving our aim):

- A sustainable organisation able to deliver its plan and priorities.
- Systems and processes are embedded, that enable the workforce to deliver the plan efficiently and effectively.
- Ensuring OD&D have the capacity to deliver

The key programmes of action that will deliver this improvement and change are:

Action	Description and Purpose
Strategic workforce planning	Strategic workforce planning will ensure we know our workforce well, identifying our challenges and our achievements. This will inform our recruitment and retention strategies, we will understand why people come to work for us, why they stay and why they leave. We will know what skills the workforce have and need now and into the future. We will understand the future needs of the Council and its residents, and we will shape our organisation to become sustainable. Ensuring OD&D structures are aligned to the delivery of this plan.
Transformation aligned to Our Shropshire Plan	Review our transformation and change programmes to ensure they are strategically aligned with the priorities of both the Improvement Plan and the Corporate Plan. This ensures that all change initiatives directly support our organisational goals, drive sustainable improvement, and deliver measurable benefits for our workforce and the communities we serve. This includes how we develop our AI and digital solutions to support staff and residents, implemented into systems, to increase efficiencies and create sustainability.
Data Insights	We will regularly review and improve how we work, informed by data insights, to find efficiencies and cut costs, to work more efficiently, and deliver and enable better services. Easier systems will make things simpler for staff and customers, helping everyone feel more satisfied. These changes will also help us quickly adapt to new challenges and needs, managing demand effectively. Strong governance systems will ensure compliance is tracked and monitored and performance addressed, offering assurance against regulatory and statutory requirements.

Section 4

Making sure we deliver



Making sure we deliver the Plan

There are three key things we will do to make sure we deliver the Improvement Plan:

1. *Governance and Assurance:* We will put in place governance and assurance arrangements based on agreed principles (see figure 4), including clear accountability, responsibility and transparency. There will be robust and relevant risk management and delivery monitoring, provided by a Programme Management Office (PMO) ensuring independence and integrity. These arrangements will ensure that the Plan is delivered and achieves the required progress and impacts.
2. *Supporting delivery:* Significant and sustained investment is required to deliver the scale and pace of change required. We will ensure that the Plan and its programmes are supported through relevant resources and support. New programmes of action will need to be resourced, which may mean reviewing and deciding on where business as usual activity can be reprioritised and capacity redeployed, or assessing and identifying where there are additional resource requirements.
3. *Engagement, Involvement and Communications:* Engagement has taken place at different levels and through different forums throughout the process of developing the Plan

This has ensured understanding of the Plan, the context it is responding to and the aims we are pursuing. It has also ensured the Plan has been developed collaboratively and that priorities have been continuously iterated using internal peer review, challenge and feedback (via our Senior Leaders Forum - SLF).

How will we measure success?

Our People Plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains fit for purpose in helping us to achieve our organisational goals – especially as we transform through resizing. To help us monitor progress and successes, we will develop a Power BI dashboard based on the outcomes that are most important in designing and developing a Healthy Organisation that is modern, efficient, and sustainable. This dashboard will constantly guide us in our planning and decision-making.

Risk management

Risks and interdependencies between programmes and projects in the plan will be set out and managed for each one, and that portfolio level by the Senior Accountable Officers (SAOs) and Responsible Delivery Leads (RDLs).

There are also overarching risks and dependencies across the whole Improvement Plan which are set out in **Appendix 2**. All risks and dependencies will be reviewed regularly and will change e.g. with new risks being included as and when they are identified. The table of risks is not an exhaustive list, and the risks and mitigations will be kept under review.

Performance Framework

The improvement plan programmes contribute to defined outcomes. Those are underpinned by key performance indicators (KPIs) – listed in the following slides- that will enable progress to be demonstrated. Reporting on delivery will use a combination of delivery milestones and KPIs.

Reporting progress

Our People Plan is a 5-year, living document that will be regularly reviewed and updated through ongoing collaboration and feedback, ensuring it remains relevant to our evolving needs. This may include review and prioritising as required.

A change board will be established with cross organisational representation to drive the delivery of the plan, a sub structure of task and finish groups where necessary will be established under this to drive delivery.

Regular reporting from the Change Board up to Leadership Board and cabinet who will retain oversight.

Staff Engagement will take place for the duration of the Plan. This will provide assurance to staff we are making progress towards the commitments we have made.

Appendix 1: Priority Programmes of Action Summaries



Priority: Our Culture		What We Will Do:		
How Will We Achieve this? (Priority number included)		Evidence of success	Start	End
1: One Purpose, underpinned by our Values Develop values / cultural indicators		Staff, Members and Leaders will promote and demonstrate the highest ethical standards and appropriate working behaviours through established shared values and ways of working.	Nov 2025	March 2026
Develop culture development training for managers and members that is on going and embedded and impact monitored through the cultural indicators		A culture of cooperation, respect and trust between departments exists, along with a commitment to transparent decision-making. Shared values enables a respect for a councillor’s need to know and enquire and for officers and members to engage and collaborate to achieve needs of both.	Nov 2025	June 2026
Ask, Assist, Act (AAA) Program rolled out across the organisation, outlining our approach to customer service		Roll out AAA across the organisation. Measure and report on customer satisfaction rates across the Council. Increased confidence in recognising and responding to needs. Increased knowledge and navigation of reliable information	Jan 2026	Dec 2026
2: Engagement and Communications Pulse Survey and action plan		Regular pulse surveys, produce an overview of a healthy organisation, which offers assurance of a healthy culture across the organisation.	July 2025	March 2026
Development of the Intranet -initial refresh followed by regular updates and improvements as needed		Staff tell us they are able to find the information they need easily, including policy, process or information required to carry out their roles well.	Sept 2025	March 2026 then Ongoing
3. Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Updating, prioritisation and delivery of action plan through the dedicated EDI group with a strong lived experience voice		Prioritise developing an organisational wide Equity, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EEDIB) Plan that integrates EEDIB across all elements of our system, e.g., recruitment, L&D, engagement, policies and service design.	Sept 2025	Ongoing
4. Valuing and Supporting new and current staff Celebrating staff, team and whole organisation achievements		A process for recognition of staff achievements is embedded and consistently applied across the organisation. Staff tell us they feel supported, achievements are regularly shared and celebrated.	Nov 2025	April 2026
9: Workforce skills audit Gap analysis between current state and what good looks like		Skills Audit A comprehensive self-assessment exercise against 'good-enough' to provide a solid baseline, a source of continuous improvement and targeted action (see also leadership and talent)	Jan 2026	April 2026
10: Performance management Process for learning lessons from complaints		A learning and improvement mindset e.g. lessons are learnt from complaints, reviews, audits, fed into behaviors and new ways of working	Jan 2026	July 2026
Review of the code of conduct setting the right culture in_ the organisation		Reduction in complaints Increased satisfaction rates in staff pulse survey Reduction in performance related issues	March 2026	Dec 2026
Performance management framework and training to support implementation aligned to new Shropshire Plan		A culture of robust performance management and compliance with our values, ways of working, legislation, strategies, policies and procedures throughout the organisation.	Dec 2025	July 2026

Aim: Leadership and Talent

How Will We Achieve this? (Priority number included)	Evidence of success	Start	End
1: One Purpose, underpinned by our Values Relationship building training for officers and members, with regular updates and check ins.	Effective and timely responses to issues with acceptance of the need to make changes and without a culture of blame.	Oct 2025	Mar 2025
2: Engagement and Communications Central communication channels	Effective channels are in place to communicate key messages, plans and achievements to staff, members and residents. For example, CE newsletter, town hall events, induction to Leadership for staff, webinars and Leadership cascades.	July 2025	April 2026
5: Leadership, Visibility, Communications and competency framework Senior Leadership Forum will meet Monthly and can meet more frequently when required	Senior Leaders will be engaged in the improvement and sustainability planning for the Council; they will be invested in and able to lead their services areas with confidence to meet the outcomes of Our Shropshire Plan.	July 2025	July 2026
6: Leadership and management programme Engage with Senior Leadership Forum and Staff regarding the Performance Management Framework, including Good Conversations	The workforce is engaged and invested in a positive performance culture. Expectations and standards are well understood, and achievements are celebrated.	Jan 2026	Mar 2027
Getting Management Right Programme is delivered	Managers will feel confident and competent in their roles, will have the tools and knowledge to do the job and the Council will be high performing, healthy organisation.	Jan 2026	April 2027
Leadership competency framework and development programme	Senior officers have the capacity and capability to provide the authority with effective strategic direction . Senior officers and managers consistently demonstrate effective strategic direction and visible leadership across the council, resulting in a unified and motivated workforce	April 2026	April 2027
7: Coaching and mentoring systems Coaching and mentoring programme	This is explored and the right programme is put in place	May 2026	May 2027
8: Strategic workforce planning Leadership Board interim structure implemented and communicated	Senior officers have the capacity and capability to provide the authority with effective strategic direction	March 2025	Dec 2026
Our People Plan developed and published	A demonstrable commitment to leadership and member development, including the need to develop specialist training for key roles	Oct 2025	Dec 2026

What We Will Do: (Priority, Number, Measure)		Evidence of success	Start	End
4. Valuing and Supporting new and current staff		Data tells us staff are engaged with our well-being offer and it is meeting their needs	Jan 2026	June 2026
A review of the Health and well-being offer available to staff				
6: Leadership and management programme		Everyone has a workplan, feeding into a team/service plan and an appraisal with a professional development plan (PDP) all feeding into the Shropshire Plan. Staff tell us they feel invested in.	Jan 2026	April 2027
Good conversations developed, implemented and embedded				
8: Strategic workforce planning		Compliance of all mandatory and essential training requirements across the organisation.	July 2025	April 2026
Mandatory training review				
Learning and development policy		Staff feel supported to develop and their talent is neutered. Consistent and fair policy application ensures equity.	Oct 2025	Mar 2026
An Apprenticeship Strategy aligned to Our Shropshire Plan		Resources are aligned to the delivery of our Shropshire Plan Apprenticeship first approach adopted throughout the organisation	April 2026	April 2028
Strategic Workforce Planning		The right people, in the right roles with the right resources. Service plans inform the size and shape of the organisation and the resources required to deliver the ambitions of the Council.	March 2025	July 2026
9. Workforce Skills audit		Skills and gaps are well understood and CPD, training and Apprenticeships are aligned to these gaps. Ensuring a highly skilled workforce able to meet the needs of the organisation.	Jan 2026	April 2026
Data and digital skills programme		Staff develop the right skills to deliver Our Shropshire Plan	April 2026	April 2028
4. Valuing and Supporting new and current staff		Staff are actively supported to take up volunteering opportunities through the relaunched employee volunteer programme. Evidence of success will include increased participation rates in volunteering, positive feedback from staff, and demonstrable contributions to both the community and voluntary sector.	April 2026	April 2027
Relaunch the employee volunteer programme				
4. Valuing and Supporting new and current staff		Data shared by premises tells us about the utilisation of the buildings by staff across the workforce. Staff pulse survey satisfaction levels improve, showing staff have good access to the resources they require, including meeting space and time to come together with their team and service area and for collaboration. Review in April 2026.	Nov 2025	January 2026
Improving the physical working conditions and environment for our workforce through a review of current premises				

How Will We Achieve this? (Priority number included)	Evidence of success	Start	End
10: Performance management framework Review and launch a new employee performance management framework	The workforce (service) are managed efficiently and effectively, with clear and credible strategies demonstrating how services will be delivered in the future, with an effective system for performance management.	Nov 2026	July 2026
Performance and appraisals training and tools (Good Conversations)	A culture of robust performance management and compliance with our values, ways of working, legislation, strategies, policies and procedures and priorities throughout the organisation.	Jan 2026	April 2027
Council-wide performance dashboard	A balanced performance dashboard that evidences service delivery performance and provides Councillors, stakeholders and residents with clear, robust and meaningful information.	March 2026	July 2027
Training developed and delivered to support the SMART service planning and delivery process aligned to service planning development	Clearly evidenced progress to provide assurance on performance, delivery and outcomes across all service areas.	Nov 2025	July 2026
8: Strategic workforce planning A whole organisation workforce plan will include a learning and development offer that ensures the right opportunities are available for the workforce to excel.	Staff across all service areas report increased access to relevant learning and development opportunities, with high participation rates in training programmes aligned to organisational needs. Skills audits show a measurable reduction in identified skills gaps, and feedback from staff surveys indicates improved confidence and capability in their roles. The workforce plan is regularly reviewed and updated, ensuring that learning and development remains responsive to emerging priorities. As a result, the organisation demonstrates higher staff satisfaction, improved retention, and enhanced service delivery outcomes.	April 2026	March 2027
15: Data insights Data insights dashboard informs future plans and development	Leaders are data informed and plans and strategies are aligned to the needs of residents, communities, partners and staff. The Council is agile and adaptive to the needs of communities and residents.	Dec 25	July 2026

How Will We Achieve this? (Priority number included)	Evidence of success	Start	End
8: Strategic workforce planning Ensure the organisation has the right skills, resources and workforce to deliver its plan. This may mean increases to some areas and reductions in others.	A sustainable organisation able to deliver its plan and priorities.	Dec 25	Dec 2030
10: Performance management Support and accountability for Budget holders to complete Budget monitoring (BMR) accurately and more broadly finance training as identified in the CPC action plan (see improvement plan action)	All BMR's are completed on time, to accurately forecast the financial position	Oct 25	Feb 2026
14: Transformation aligned to Our Priorities Transformation aligned to Our Shropshire Plan	Efficient and effective systems and processes are embedded, that enable the workforce to deliver the Councils ambitions. This includes best value, adoption of AI and Automation and prioritisation of workplans and resources.	Oct 25	Jan 2026
AI and digital solutions are implemented into systems, to increase efficiencies	AI and Digital uptake is embedded into the way we work	Dec 25	Ongoing (through to March 2029)
2. Engagement and Communication Recommission a Learning Platform that is modern, efficient and effective in leading and driving a positive culture, enabling us to realise our ambition to be a modern, efficient, learning organisation.	Staff regularly access learning opportunities and collaborate together inside the learning platform. Staff develop skills, confidence and experience required to be the Council of the future. Pulse survey outcomes tell us staff feel they have the right learning opportunities and tell us the organisational culture reflects our PROUD values and ambition to be a learning organisation.	May 2025	Sept 2026

Appendix 2: Risks




Risk	Mitigation
Capacity and pace of delivery - Failure to deliver the improvement plan in a timely and effective manner due to capacity constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive a robust view of the resourcing requirements to deliver the plan, with reprioritisation and allocation taking place. • Clear and consistent leadership setting out the direction, pace, outcomes and expectations of the change required. • Governance and delivery arrangements that remove siloed working • Accountability and responsibility clearly articulated and demonstrated, including through progress and impact reporting
Resourcing the plan - Inability to reallocate and invest in functions to support the delivery of the plan will lead to difficulties in delivering the People Plan	<p>The delivery approach for the People Plan will set out the strategic framework which workforce activity will be delivered within, bringing together the Improvement Plan and the Sustainability Strategy, with the MTFS.</p> <p>A new Corporate Plan is being developed and this will take the priorities of the council, alongside the People Plan, improvement plan and the financial strategy.</p> <p>Specifying and negotiating with MHCLG the amount and use of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) to deliver financial stability through the Improvement Plan and financial sustainability in the medium to longer term.</p>
Understanding and perception of change - Inability to maintain stakeholder confidence leading to reduced support for the people plan	<p>Clear and timely internal and external communications and engagement that describes the process the Council is going through with open and honest descriptions of current progress while setting out the rationale for change and where the council is aiming to be in the future.</p>
Managing interdependencies across the plan - Failure to manage interdependencies across the people plan leading to disruption, duplication or failure in delivering the people plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for direct communications between SAOs responsible for the programmes of action has been identified early. • Interdependencies between the programmes have been identified and shared. • Changes in the performance or scope of change programmes will be communicated via the proposed governance structure. • Clear leadership will set out the aims and priorities of the change required. • Strengthened Project Management Office (PMO)

Appendix 3:

Key Performance Indicators



<div>  <div>Shropshire</div> </div>		Key Performance Metrics	
Key Measures	Source	Reporting	Priority
Pulse survey measures staff sentiment and perceptions	Pulse Survey (mandatory metrics)	6 Month Survey	Culture, Leadership and Talent, Capability and Capacity
Reduction in stress-related sickness	Workforce Data	Monthly	Culture
Increase in customer satisfaction score/target to achieve satisfaction of xx % (to be developed)	Customer Satisfaction Data	Monthly	Culture
Monitor and improve Member satisfaction rates (to be developed)	Member satisfaction	Quartey	Culture
Diversity / inclusion data measures	Workforce diversity report	Quarterly	Culture
Staff turnover and retention, including within the first 6 weeks of recruitment	Workforce Data	Quarterly	Culture
Positive levels of engagement across all parts of the organisation	Uptake and input at engagement events including staff engagement forum, focus groups and in working groups Engagement with online surveys, portals and intranet sites	Monthly	Culture, Leadership and Talent, Capability and Capacity
Well-being data: access to resources	Commissioned service reports, to evidence affective staff take up and staff satisfaction with the service	Quarterly	Culture, Capability and Capacity
Engagement Rates on Mandatory Training	Tracking of Training Programmes through the Learning Management System	Quarterly	Capability and Capacity, Sustainability and Performance
% of workforce that are agency staff	Agency workforce data and costs	Quarterly	
Numbers on the digital and data programme	Apprenticeship Levy data		
% of Appraisals and PDPs completed	Audit, Pulse survey, staff engagement	Monthly	Capability and Capacity, Sustainability and Performance
Service plans audit	Quality and quantity compliance	Monthly	
Uptake and completion of Apprenticeships	Apprenticeship Levy data	Quarterly	Leadership and Talent,, Capability and Capacity
Budget monitoring completion rates	MTFS confidently shows actual financial position	Monthly	Systems and Establishment
Number of FOIs and SARs and performance in responding to them	Governance data	Monthly	Performance, Capability and Capacity
Audit outcomes completions	Governance data	Monthly	Performance, Capability and Capacity
% of staff and members completing mandatory training (including budget management)	Learning Platform – Power BO	Monthly	Capacity and Capability, Performance

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Committee and Date

Council
11th December 2025

Item

Public



Setting the Council Tax Taxbase 2026/27

Responsible Officer:	James Walton, Executive Director (Section 151)	
email:	james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk	
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Roger Evans, Finance	

1. Synopsis

This report presents the Council Tax Taxbase for 2026/27. The report outlines the Council Tax discount policies, Council Tax Support Scheme and the Collection Rate and the impact of these on the taxbase.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In order to determine the appropriate Council Tax levels for Shropshire Council, it is necessary to determine the Council Tax taxbase for the area. The budget requirements of the various precepting authorities are divided by this figure to arrive at the Band D Council Tax.
- 2.2 This report sets out the Council Tax taxbase for 2026/27 and the policies used to determine the taxbase.
- 2.3 For 2026/27 the Council Tax taxbase will be 121,852.37 Band D equivalents, this is an increase of 0.39% from 2025/26.
- 2.4 The policies and assumptions used in determining the taxbase are:
 - A. The minor amendments to the Council Tax Support scheme have no impact on the taxbase determination

- B. 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
- C. 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
- D. Continuation of the “six week rule” in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties
- E. Continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount policy in respect of properties which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than one year
- F. Continuation of the discretionary Council Tax policy to levy a Council Tax premium of 100% in respect of second homes (other than those that retain a 50% discount through regulation as a result of job related protection)
- G. Estimated Collection rate of 98.0% for 2026/27

3. Recommendations

Full Council are asked:-

- 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 2026/27, as detailed in Appendix A, totalling 121,852.37 Band D equivalents.
- 3.2 To approve the changes to the Council's localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2026/27. 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 7,950.74 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 243.34 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 859.89 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 194.22 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 202.66 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
- 3.11 To note the continuation 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 1,390.00 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.
- 3.12 To approve a collection rate for the year 2026/27 of 98.0%.
- 3.13 That the Council Tax Support policy and other similar Council Tax and Business Rate policies are reviewed and consulted upon, where necessary, over 2026 with a view to implementing any revisions by Financial Year 2027/28 at the latest.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 Expression of Council Tax Support in terms of Band D equivalents results in a higher potential for inaccuracies in the determination process as Council Tax Support is a significantly more volatile discount element.
- 4.2 Details of the potential risk in relation to establishing a collection rate allowance is detailed within this report in Section 8.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands and a financial emergency was declared by Cabinet on 10 September 2025. The overall financial position of the Council is set out in the monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. Significant management action has been instigated at all levels of the Council reducing spend to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all reports to Members provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers and/or Portfolio Holders review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. All non-essential spend will be stopped and all essential spend challenged. These actions may involve (this is not exhaustive):

- scaling down initiatives,
- changing the scope of activities,
- delaying implementation of agreed plans, or
- extending delivery timescales.

5.2 The Council Tax taxbase figure impacts on the Council Tax that will be levied by the Council for 2026/27.

5.3 The implication of the Council's localised Council Tax Support scheme are detailed in Appendix B.

5.4 The financial implications of the discounts and premiums to be applied in 2026/27 are detailed in Appendix C.

5.5 The implications regarding the determined collection rate are detailed in Section 8.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

6.1 The Setting the Council Tax Taxbase 2026/27 report and recommendations have no direct effect on climate change.

7. Background

7.1 Shropshire Council has responsibility for determining the Council Tax taxbase for the Council's geographical area.

7.2 The taxbase for Council Tax must be set between 1 December 2025 and 31 January 2026 in relation to 2026/27 as prescribed by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012.

7.3 The Council is also required to inform the major precepting authorities, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner and Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority, of the taxbase to enable the calculation of Council Tax for the following year. Each town and parish

council is also notified of its own Council Tax taxbase. A detailed build of the taxbase analysed by both parish and town council and Environment Agency region is shown in Appendix A.

- 7.4 The purpose of this report, therefore, is to determine and approve the Council Tax taxbase for Shropshire Council for 2026/27.

8. Additional Information

Taxbase Calculation

- 8.1 Based on the valuation list, the Council Tax taxbase is the number of properties in the area falling within each council tax property valuation band, modified to take account of the adjustments set out below. Taxbase is expressed as a Band D equivalent.

- 8.2 An analysis of Council Tax bands within Shropshire Council is detailed below:

Property Band	House Value	Ratio to Band D	Analysis of Dwellings on the Valuation List (%)	% Increase / (Decrease) over 2024/25
A	Under £40,000	6/9	18.0	0.5
B	40,001 - 52,000	7/9	25.5	0.6
C	52,001 - 68,000	8/9	20.9	0.9
D	68,001 - 88,000	9/9	14.5	0.6
E	88,001 - 120,000	11/9	11.6	1.0
F	120,001 - 160,000	13/9	6.1	0.8
G	160,001 - 320,000	15/9	3.2	0.3
H	Over 320,000	18/9	0.2	0.0

- 8.3 There are 152,932 properties in the valuation list for the Shropshire Council area. This compares with a figure of 151,872 in the list at the same time last year. There has been an increase of 1,060 properties overall, which equates to 0.70%.

- 8.4 The methodology followed for calculating the taxbase is as follows:

- 8.5 Ascertain the number of properties in each Council Tax band (A to H) shown in the valuation list as at 10 September 2025.

- 8.6 Adjust for estimated changes in the number of properties through new build, demolitions and exemptions

- 8.7 The number of discounts and disabled relief allowances which apply as at 6 October 2025.

- 8.8 Convert the number of properties in each Council Tax band to Band D equivalents by using the ratio of each band to Band D and so arrive at the total number of Band D equivalents for the Council.
- 8.9 Adjust the total number of Band D equivalents by the estimated Council Tax collection rate for the year.
- 8.10 These calculations are undertaken for each property band in each parish.

Collection Rate

- 8.11 In determining the taxbase, an allowance must be made to provide for changes to the taxbase during the year (e.g. due to new properties, appeals against banding, additional discounts, Council Tax Support award changes, etc.) as well as losses on collection arising from non-payment. This is achieved by estimating a Council Tax collection rate for the year and must be common for the whole of Shropshire.
- 8.12 A collection rate of 98.2% was assumed for the 2025/26 financial year and it is recommended that a collection rate of 98.0% should be assumed for the purpose of determining the Council Tax taxbase in 2026/27.
- 8.13 Actual in year collection rates in 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 were 98.2%, 97.8% and 97.7% respectively.
- 8.14 If the actual rate exceeds 98.0% a surplus is generated, which is shared between the Unitary Council, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner and Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority, pro rata to their demand on the Collection Fund for the relevant year. Conversely, any shortfall in the collection rate results in a deficit, which is shared in a similar manner. The surplus or deficit is considered in setting the Council Tax in the following year.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Local Member: ALL

Appendices

Appendix A: 2026/27 Parish and Town Council Tax Taxbase Summary for Shropshire Council.

Appendix B: Shropshire Council's Localised Council Tax Support Scheme

Appendix C: Discretionary Discount Policies

2026/27 Parish and Town Council Council Tax Taxbase Summary for Shropshire Council

APPENDIX A

Parish / Town Council	Council Tax Taxbase (Band D Equivalents)
Abdon & Heath	117.06
Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley	268.43
Acton Scott	42.61
Adderley	196.96
Alberbury with Cardeston	418.10
Albrighton and Donington	2,319.97
All Stretton, Smethcott & Woolstaston	183.27
Alveley & Romsley	910.20
Ashford Bowdler	38.25
Ashford Carbonel	204.02
Astley	212.62
Astley Abbots	248.39
Aston Bottrell, Burwarton & Cleobury North	114.49
Atcham	102.06
Badger	65.53
Barrow	278.54
Baschurch	1,347.04
Bayston Hill	1,841.39
Beckbury	149.69
Bedstone & Bucknell	346.71
Berrington	469.51
Bettws-Y-Crwyn	94.12
Bicton	386.81
Billingsley, Deuxhill, Glazeley & Middleton Scriven	170.26
Bishops Castle Town	714.14
Bitterley	356.24
Bomere Heath & District	890.58
Boningale	147.72
Boraston	80.96
Bridgnorth Town	4,698.83
Bromfield	120.45
Broseley Town	1,631.26
Buildwas	175.26
Burford	459.03
Cardington	224.57
Caynham	549.35
Chelmarsh	230.62
Cheswardine	407.59
Chetton	163.04
Childs Ercall	313.89
Chirbury with Brompton	360.42
Church Preen, Hughley & Kenley	131.54
Church Pulverbatch	172.74
Church Stretton & Little Stretton Town	2,247.02
Claverley	958.45
Clee St. Margaret	74.25
Cleobury Mortimer	1,220.06
Clive	251.27
Clun Town with Chapel Lawn	545.92
Clunbury	257.75

2026/27 Parish and Town Council Council Tax Taxbase Summary for Shropshire Council

APPENDIX A

Parish / Town Council	Council Tax Taxbase (Band D Equivalents)
Clungunford	149.85
Cockshutt-cum-Petton	324.57
Condover	966.40
Coreley	140.62
Cound	218.23
Craven Arms Town	839.83
Cressage, Harley & Sheinton	424.59
Culmington	176.79
Diddlebury	299.14
Ditton Priors	409.42
Eardington	251.01
Easthope, Shipton & Stanton Long	216.76
Eaton-Under-Heywood & Hope Bowdler	197.15
Edgton	50.64
Ellesmere Rural	995.02
Ellesmere Town	1623.04
Farlow	200.05
Ford	340.33
Great Hanwood	425.84
Great Ness & Little Ness	564.91
Greete	49.51
Grinshill	113.84
Hadnall	379.28
Highley	1154.73
Hinstock	561.38
Hodnet	633.26
Hope Bagot	34.11
Hopesay	272.26
Hopton Cangeford & Stoke St. Milborough	170.99
Hopton Castle	42.04
Hopton Wafers	325.41
Hordley	101.99
Ightfield	220.63
Kemberton	122.38
Kinlet	457.38
Kinnerley	530.14
Knockin	145.48
Leebotwood & Longnor	201.35
Leighton & Eaton Constantine	204.11
Llanfairwaterdine	109.89
Llanyblodwel	277.63
Llanymynech & Pant	691.28
Longden	550.31
Loppington	292.59
Ludford	493.9
Ludlow Town	3716.8
Lydbury North	236.41
Lydham & More	142.51
Mainstone & Colebatch	90.18

2026/27 Parish and Town Council Council Tax Taxbase Summary for Shropshire Council

APPENDIX A

Parish / Town Council	Council Tax Taxbase (Band D Equivalents)
Market Drayton Town	4,350.60
Melverley	54.79
Milson & Neen Sollars	126.45
Minsterley	653.40
Montford	256.15
Moreton Corbett & Lee Brockhurst	149.51
Moreton Say	230.32
Morville, Acton Round, Aston Eyre, Monkhoppton & Upton Cressett	403.46
Much Wenlock Town	1,280.08
Munslow	192.50
Myddle & Broughton	630.24
Myndtown, Norbury, Ratlinghope & Wentnor	275.21
Nash	150.83
Neen Savage	157.20
Neenton	65.36
Newcastle	137.73
Norton-In-Hales	344.72
Onibury	136.56
Oswestry Rural	1,714.05
Oswestry Town	5,522.18
Pontesbury	1,413.35
Prees	1,231.47
Quatt Malvern	106.28
Richards Castle	146.30
Rushbury	288.13
Ruyton-XI-Towns	474.73
Ryton & Grindle	80.76
Selattyn & Gobowen	1,446.23
Shawbury	908.21
Sheriffhales	343.36
Shifnal Town	3,591.39
Shrewsbury Town	27,713.12
Sibdon Carwood	49.24
St. Martins	1,054.85
Stanton Lacy	171.62
Stanton-Upon-Hine Heath	254.88
Stockton	137.40
Stoke-Upon-Tern	538.80
Stottesdon & Sidbury	352.20
Stowe	52.86
Sutton Maddock	111.02
Sutton-Upon-Tern	422.27
Tasley	410.73
Tong	124.64
Uffington	109.03
Upton Magna	156.69
Welshampton & Lyneal	392.71
Wem Rural	702.20
Wem Town	2,054.87
West Felton	613.92

2026/27 Parish and Town Council Council Tax Taxbase Summary for Shropshire Council

APPENDIX A

Parish / Town Council	Council Tax Taxbase (Band D Equivalents)
Westbury	524.39
Weston Rhyn	937.41
Weston-Under-Redcastle	123.64
Wheathill	84.06
Whitchurch Rural	692.38
Whitchurch Town	3,694.50
Whittington	1,035.56
Whitton	58.67
Whixall	336.38
Wistanstow	335.65
Withington	107.29
Woore	620.63
Worfield & Rudge	949.64
Worthen with Shelve	856.42
Wroxeter & Uppington	166.21
Shropshire Council Total	121,852.37
Environment Agency - Severn Trent Region	114,272.72
Environment Agency - Welsh Region	4,813.10
Environment Agency - North West Region	2,766.55
Shropshire Council Total	121,852.37

Council Tax Support

- 1.1. The 2010 Spending Review announced the localisation of council tax support and The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit from 31 March 2013 and required that Local Government created a localised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme effective from 1 April 2013, accommodating a reduction in funding of 10%.
- 1.2. Shropshire Council's localised CTS scheme was approved in December 2018. Several small amendments have been made to the main Council Tax Support Scheme to take effect from 1st April 2026. These amendments are detailed in the scheme summary included in section 1.7 below.
- 1.3. From 2013, therefore, council tax support has taken the form of reductions within the council tax system, replacing national council tax benefit. Making reductions as part of the council tax system reduces a billing authority's Council Tax taxbase. Billing and major precepting authorities receive funding (Council Tax Support Grant) which reduce their council tax requirement and, depending on the design of the local council tax scheme, can help offset the council tax revenue foregone through reductions.
- 1.4. An estimate of the effect of the local Council Tax Support Scheme on the Council Tax taxbase has been determined for Shropshire. It is estimated that the Council Tax Support Scheme will reduce the Council Tax taxbase by 7,950.74 Band D equivalents.
- 1.5. As Council Tax Support entitlement will vary throughout the year and this will affect the taxbase it is more likely that the amount of Council Tax collected in 2026/27 will vary from the estimate.
- 1.6. A link to the full scheme for 2025/26 is below.

<https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/media/ucbdasz1/council-tax-reduction-scheme-2025-2026.pdf>

- 1.7 The CTS scheme summary is provided on the following pages.

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL – BENEFITS SERVICE

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT (CTS)

Introduction

The current Council Tax Benefit scheme is a means tested benefit that helps people with a low income to pay their Council Tax.

From April 2013 this will be abolished and all local authorities will provide a new scheme called 'Council Tax Support'. The funding that is provided for this scheme will be reduced by 10% and therefore it is likely that some people will have to pay more towards their Council Tax bill.

The changes will not affect pensioners even though they will move into the new scheme. The Government have confirmed that all pensioners will be protected and receive the same amount of benefit they do now under the current Council Tax Benefit Scheme.

Each local authority will be able to provide Council Tax support in a different way depending on local needs, funding available and how it can be administered. Each Council is expected to devise a new scheme and then put this to public consultation by the end of 2012.

Our new scheme was devised and published on the Shropshire Council website for customers, stakeholders and other agencies to comment on. Public consultation closed on the 14th December and the new scheme was formally adopted by the Council on 16th January 2013.

Anyone of working age will now be subject to the new scheme from April 2013. The differences that you will see in the new Council Tax Support Scheme are: -

- Removal of second adult rebate
- Reduction of the capital limit from £16,000 to £10,000
- Removal of earnings disregards
- Removal of child benefit disregard
- Increase in non-dependant deductions

Please note the following amendments are for the calculation of Council Tax Support only and do not affect Housing Benefit calculations.

Removal of Second Adult Rebate

Second Adult Rebate (2AR) is awarded to a customer based on the circumstances of a second adult living in the property. Under the new scheme this has been abolished and will no longer be effective from 01.04.13.

Reduction of the capital limit

For working age people the capital limit will reduce to £10,000 from 01.04.13. This will mean that if a customer's savings amounts to more than £10,000, they will not be entitled to CTS. The lower capital limit of £6,000 remains the same.

Tariff income calculations remain as is i.e. from the total amount if capital £6,000 is deducted, the remainder is then divided by 250 if the result is not an exact multiple of £1 the result is rounded up to the next whole £1

All other capital rules including static savings, land and property, shares, etc remain the same.

Removal of Earnings disregards

All income disregards for working age people will cease from the 01.04.13.

Removal of Child Benefit disregards

Child benefit will no longer be disregarded from the calculation of CTS from the 01.04.03.

Increase in non-dependant earned income deductions (working age only)

From 01.04.13 non dep deductions will increase to the following: -

£5 for anyone earning under £100,
£10 for anyone earning between £100 and £150
£20 for anyone earning over £150 per week

This deduction will only be made from their earned income. It won't affect any other income they receive.

Non-dependant earned income deductions (pension age only)

Gross income less than £186.00	=	£3.65
Gross income £186.00 to £321.99	=	£7.25
Gross income £322.00 to £400.99	=	£9.15
Gross income £401.00 or above	=	£10.95

Unearned income will attract the following disregards (working age and pension age):

Others aged 18 or over incl. JSAC & ESAC	=	£3.65
In receipt of Pension Credit, IS, JSA (IB), ESA(IR)	=	nil

(This disregard will be up-rated annually in line with figures provided annually by DCLG)

A new minimum earnings threshold will be introduced with effect from 01/04/15 to reflect the current arrangements in the Housing Benefit scheme.

This minimum earnings threshold will help to determine whether a European Economic Area (EEA) national's previous or current work can be treated as genuine and effective for the purposes of deciding whether they have a right to reside in the UK as a worker or self-employed person.

The minimum earnings threshold has been set at the level at which workers start to pay National Insurance Contributions (NICs), currently £153 a week in the 2014/15 tax year. If an EEA national can prove that they have been earning at least this amount for a period of 3 months immediately before they claim CTS their work can be treated as genuine and effective and they will have a right to reside as a worker or self-employed person.

If they do not satisfy the minimum earnings threshold criteria, a further assessment will be undertaken against a broader range of criteria (such as hours worked, pattern of work, nature of employment contract etc.) to determine whether their employment is genuine and effective.

Ultimately, if an EEA national's income does not meet the minimum earnings threshold or the additional criteria to be classified as genuine and effective employment they will not be eligible for CTS.

Special Educations Needs Allowance – to be disregarded in full with effect from 01/09/14

War Pensions / Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Guaranteed Income Payments – to be disregarded in full with effect from 01/04/13 (and to be consistent with Housing Benefit)

From 01/04/15 the CTR scheme will include changes to the habitual residency test to reflect changes to the Housing Benefit (HB) regulations.

The amendments to the CTS scheme removes access to CTS for EEA jobseekers who make a new claim for CTS on or after 1 April 2015. EEA nationals who are self-employed, are workers or who are unemployed but retain their worker status have the same rights to CTS as a UK national and their situation remains unchanged.

EEA jobseekers who are entitled to CTS and JSA(IB) on 31 March 2015 will be protected until they have a break in their claim for CTS or JSA. If their JSA ends because they have started work, then as long as we can be satisfied that their employment is genuine and effective they will be able to access in-work CTS as either a worker or a self-employed person. Claimants receiving in-work CTS beyond 1 April will continue to be able to access CTS, if they become entitled to JSA(IB) on or after that date, but only if they retain their worker status. If they are a jobseeker then their CTS entitlement ends from the Monday following the cessation of work.

Changes with effect from 1 April 2018 to bring the scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes

- **2 child cap**

The Government has announced that they will limit benefit support by only taking into account a maximum of two dependent children per family. It affects all claims where new children are born after April 2017. This will apply in Housing Benefit to families that make a new claim from April 2017

- **Loss of the family premium**

The Government removed the family premium for new claims within the assessment of Housing Benefit with effect from May 2016

- **Bereavement Support Payments to be disregarded in full**

This was introduced into Housing Benefit with effect from April 2017

- **Any payments from the 'We love Manchester Fund' and the 'London Emergency Trust' to be disregarded in full**

- **Maximum backdate period of 1 month**

- **Absence from home limited to 4 weeks when outside GB**

The temporary absence rules for Housing Benefit were amended in 2015 reducing the allowable period of temporary absence outside Great Britain from 13 weeks to 4 weeks.

The limit applies to new periods of absence only. Exceptions are when an absence is in relation to

- Death of a partner, child or close relative
- Receiving medical treatment
- A person who has fled their home due to fear of violence
- A member of Her Majesty's forces posted overseas

- **Beneficial changes in circumstances to be reported within one month of the change in order for the claim to be updated from the date of change, otherwise changes will take effect from the Monday following date notified.**

- **All working aged claimants who receive Council Tax Support (unless they are a pensioner or classed as vulnerable) will pay 20% of their council tax liability, (after appropriate discounts have been awarded)**

An example of this change is as follows:

1) Current scheme (which allows for 100% reduction)

The customer's liability is £20.00 per week. As they are in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance they are entitled to full Council tax reduction making their council tax balance for the year £0.00

2) Proposed new scheme (20% minimum payment)

The customer liability is £20.00. Before any calculation takes place 20% of this amount is reduced from the liability to be used. This means that any calculation will be carried out on a figure of £16.00. Again the customer is on Jobseekers Allowance and so they are entitled to a full award. This will mean their council tax balance for the year will be £208.00 (£4.00 x 52).

- **De Minimis change amount of £10.00 per week for claimants in receipt of Universal Credit**
- **Apply a minimum award of £1.50**
- **Claimant or partner who meet the specific criteria of severe disablement contained within the policy will be protected from any percentage reduction in council tax support. Claimant or partner in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance will be protected from any percentage reduction in council tax support. This will also apply to customers who meet the criteria for receiving a war compensation related benefit or pension. Specifically this includes**

Criteria to be awarded for the severe disability premium:

- The customer has to be in receipt of
 - 1) Attendance allowance or
 - 2) Higher or middle rate care component of disability living allowance or
 - 3) The daily living allowance rate of personal independence payments
- They must not have a resident non-dependant
- No person is entitled to, and in receipt of, carers allowance in respect of caring for the customer and;
- If the customer has a partner they must also meet all above criteria

Criteria to be awarded the support component of employment and support allowance

It is accepted that some people's difficulties or disabilities are such that not only is the person not expected to look for work but are also not expected to undertake an work related activities or plan for starting work due to the severity of their difficulties

Criteria to qualify for the war pension's exemption

The customer and/or partner has to be in receipt of either:

- War pension
- War disablement pension
- War service attributable pension
- War widows pension
- War mobility supplement

Changes with effect from 1 April 2019

Severe Disability Premium does not exist in Universal Credit. From 1 April 2019 claimants or couples that have moved into Universal Credit but meet the above criteria for the severe disablement premium will be exempt from the percentage reduction.

Employment and support allowance does not form part of Universal Credit. Instead there is a limited capability for work and limited capability for work related activity element in Universal Credit which is similar to that used for identifying the work related activity group and support group of Employment Support Allowance. From 1 April 2019 claimants

or partners in receipt of the limited capability for work related activity element in Universal Credit that is the equivalent to the support element of employment and support allowance will be exempt from the percentage reduction.

Changes with effect from 1 April 2020

- We have defined a council tax reversal as an amount of Council Tax Support to which the claimant was not entitled, and we have clarified what action the Council will take depending on whether the reversal is caused by claimant error, or official error.
- We have clarified that where a reversal is due to claimant error the total sum of the reversal shall be fully chargeable and recoverable as part of the claimant's council tax liability
- We have clarified that where the reversal arose due to official error, that where the claimant or their representative could reasonably have been expected at the time to realise that the assessment had been made in error, the total sum of the reversal shall be fully chargeable and recoverable as part of the claimant's council tax liability. Otherwise, the amount of the reversal will not be chargeable and recoverable as part of the claimant's council tax liability
- In the event of a council tax reversal, the Council will consider any underlying award that the claimant should have been entitled to provided evidence is received from the claimant within 1 month of the claimant being notified of the reversal, or where an appeal against a recoverable reversal is made
- We have clarified the definition of pensioner in accordance with new benefit rules for mixed age couples and eligibility for Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes
- Any payment made by the Home Office under the Windrush Compensation Scheme or the Windrush Exceptional Payment Scheme will be disregarded as capital

Changes with effect from 1 April 2022

CTRS scheme reg 74 (a)

Insert

(aa) who is a person on universal credit, except where the award of universal credit to that person includes an amount in respect of a liability to make payments in respect of the accommodation they occupy as their home, in accordance with section 11 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 (housing costs);

Note: This is to align the CTRS scheme with a statutory amendment to the qualifying criteria for Housing Benefit, this amendment should prevent circumstances where an applicant is excluded from CTRS whilst being eligible for HB or UCHE

CTRS scheme part 13 (106)

Insert

(14) Where there is a change of circumstances which results in a change to the maximum council tax reduction for the purposes of calculating eligibility for a reduction under PART 7 (28), from the first day of the benefit week after the date on which the change first occurred.

Note: This will insert an 80%/100% cap on maximum council tax reduction and aligns the circumstances of claimants in receipt of UC with those in receipt of Passported Benefits to ensure that a claimant's maximum CTRS is calculated appropriate to their status and that vulnerable households are not disadvantaged.

Changes with effect from 1 April 2023

Added to schedules 9 and 10 capital to be disregarded, both pens and WA (and also income other than earnings for good measure)

- (7) any payment made under or by the approved blood scheme, or the Scottish Infected Blood Support Scheme as established or approved by the Secretary of State, or trust established with funds provided by the Secretary of State
- (8) any payment made under or by a trust, established for the purpose of giving relief and assistance to disabled persons whose disabilities were caused by the fact that during their mother's pregnancy she had taken a preparation containing the drug known as Thalidomide, and which is approved by the Secretary of State.

Add to interpretation

““approved blood scheme” means a scheme established or approved by the Secretary of State, or trust established with funds provided by the Secretary of State, for the purpose of providing compensation in respect of a person having been infected from contaminated blood products;”;

Amended

105 6

From

Where the change of circumstances is the death of an applicant's partner or their separation, it takes effect on the day the death or separation occurs.

To

Where the change of circumstances is the death of an applicant's partner or their separation, it takes effect on the day the death or separation occurs.

(a) Where the applicant was included as "the partner" of the deceased (or ex-partners) Council Tax Support entitlement at date of death or separation, The Council Tax Liability created following the death of an applicant's partner or their separation falls to be treated as "first liable" within Reg 105 (2) of this scheme

Changes with effect from 1 April 2024

Added to schedule 10 capital to be disregarded (and also income other than earnings for good measure). In order to mirror changes to housing benefit regulations.

Any payment made under the post office compensation scheme (horizon compensation)

Amend regulation 109(d)

From: (d) in a case where—

- i (i) an applicant or his partner is a person on income support, an income-based jobseeker's allowance or an income-related employment and support allowance or has an award of universal credit,
- ii (ii) the applicant becomes liable for the first time to pay council tax in respect of the dwelling which he occupies as his home, and
- iii (iii) the application to the authority is received at the designated office within one month of the date of the change, the date on which the change takes place; (e) in a case where—
- iv (i) the applicant is the former partner of a person who was, at the date of his death or their separation, entitled to a reduction under this scheme, and
- v (ii) where the applicant makes an application for a reduction under this scheme within one month of the date of the death or the separation, the date of the death or separation;

To: (d) in a case where—

- vi (i) the applicant becomes liable for the first time to pay council tax in respect of the dwelling which he occupies as his home, and
- vii (ii) the application to the authority is received at the designated office within one month of the date of the change, the date on which the change takes place; (e) in a case where—

- viii (i) the applicant is the former partner of a person who was, at the date of his death or their separation, entitled to a reduction under this scheme, and
- ix (ii) where the applicant makes an application for a reduction under this scheme within one month of the date of the death or the separation, the date of the death or separation;

This allows for the customer to have a calendar month to apply for council tax support once a new liability has been created for all claims, not just those on means tested benefit. Currently those not on means tested benefit have to apply within the benefit week.

Amendments from 01st April 2025

The scheme will be amended to include the legislation that has been brought in to disregard the following as capital in the calculation of their council tax support:

- **Grenfell tower payments**
- **The horizon compensation payments**
- **Vaccine damage payments**
- **Payments for the victims of the overseas terrorism compensation payments**

In regulation 2(1) (interpretation)—

(a)for the definition of “Grenfell Tower support payment” substitute—

““Grenfell Tower support payment” means a payment made for the purpose of providing compensation or support in respect of the fire on 14th June 2017 at Grenfell Tower;”;

(b)after the definition of “historical child abuse payment” insert—

““the Horizon system” means any version of the computer system used by the Post Office known as Horizon, Horizon Legacy, Horizon Online or HNG-X;”;

(c)after the definition of “polygamous marriage” insert—

““the Post Office” means Post Office Limited (registered number 02154540);“Post Office compensation payment” means a payment made by the Post Office or the Secretary of State for the purpose of providing compensation or support which is—

(a)

in connection with the failings of the Horizon system; or

(b)

otherwise payable following the judgment in *Bates and Others v Post Office Ltd* ((No. 3) “Common Issues”)(1);”;

(d)in the definition of “qualifying person”—

(i)for “or a Windrush payment” substitute “, a Windrush payment, a Post Office compensation payment or a vaccine damage payment”;

(ii)after “the National Emergencies Trust” insert “, the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme”;

(e)after the definition of “universal credit” insert—

““vaccine damage payment” means a payment made under the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979(2);“the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme” means the scheme of that name established by the Ministry of Justice in 2012 under section 47 of the Crime and Security Act 2010(3);”.

In paragraph (5) of regulation 12 (persons treated as not being in Great Britain), before sub-paragraph (a) insert—

“(zd)a person who was residing in Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights or Lebanon immediately before 7th October 2023, left Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights or Lebanon in connection with the Hamas terrorist attack in Israel on 7th October 2023 or the violence which rapidly escalated in the region following the attack and—

(i)has been granted leave in accordance with immigration rules made under section 3(2) of the Immigration Act 1971(1),

(ii)has a right of abode in the United Kingdom within the meaning given in section 2 of that Act(2), or

(iii)does not require leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom in accordance with section 3ZA of that Act;

(ze)a person who was residing in Sudan before 15th April 2023, left Sudan in connection with the violence which rapidly escalated on 15th April 2023 in Khartoum and across Sudan and—

(i)has been granted leave in accordance with immigration rules made under section 3(2) of the Immigration Act 1971,

(ii)has a right of abode in the United Kingdom within the meaning given in section 2 of that Act, or

(iii)does not require leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom in accordance with section 3ZA of that Act;”.

(1) Schedule 1 (pensioners: matters that must be included in an authority’s scheme) is amended as follows.

(f)in sub-paragraph (9)—

(i)in paragraph (b) after “the National Emergencies Trust” insert “, the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme”;

(ii)after paragraph (bc) insert—

“(bd)any Post Office compensation payment;

(be)any vaccine damage payment;”;

(g)in sub-paragraph (10), after paragraph (ac) insert—

“(ad)any Post Office compensation payment;

(ae)any vaccine damage payment;

(af)any payment out of the estate of a person to that person’s son, daughter, step-son or step-daughter, which derives from a payment to meet the recommendation of the Infected Blood Inquiry in its interim report published on 29th July 2022(1) made under or by the Scottish Infected Blood Support Scheme or an approved blood scheme ;”.

In Schedule 6 (capital to be disregarded)—

(a)in paragraph 16—

(i)in sub-paragraph (1) after “the National Emergencies Trust” insert “, the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme”;

(ii)after sub-paragraph (1D) insert—

“(1E) Any Post Office compensation payment.

(1F) Any vaccine damage payment.

(1G) Any payment out of the estate of a person, which derives from a payment to meet the recommendation of the Infected Blood Inquiry in its interim report published on 29th July 2022 made under or by the Scottish Infected Blood Support Scheme or an approved blood support scheme to the estate of the person, where the payment is made to the person’s son, daughter, step-son or step-daughter.”;

(iii)in each of sub-paragraphs (2), (3), (5), (6) and (7) for “or a Windrush payment” substitute “, a Windrush payment, a Post Office compensation payment or a vaccine damage payment”;

(b)in paragraph 21(2)—

(i)in sub-paragraph (w) omit “or”;

(ii)after sub-paragraph (x) insert—

“or

(y)bereavement support payment under section 30 of the Pensions Act 2014(1).”;

(c)after paragraph 22 insert—

“22A. Any payment of a widowed parent’s allowance made pursuant to section 39A of the SSCBA (widowed parent’s allowance)—

(a)to the survivor of a cohabiting partnership (within the meaning in section 39A(7) of the SSCBA) who is entitled to a widowed parent’s allowance for a period before 9th February 2023(2), and

(b)in respect of any period of time during the period ending with the day before the survivor makes the claim for a widowed parent’s allowance,

but only for a period of 52 weeks beginning with the date of receipt of the payment or 1st April 2024, whichever is later.

22B.—(1) A payment of bereavement support payment in respect of the rate set out in regulation 3(2) or (5) of the Bereavement Support Payment Regulations 2017 (rate of bereavement support payment)(3), but only for the period of 52 weeks from the date of receipt of the payment.

(2) Where bereavement support payment under section 30 of the Pensions Act 2014 is paid to the survivor of a cohabiting partnership (within the meaning of section 30(6B) of that Act) in respect of a death occurring before 9th February 2023, any amount of that payment which is—

(a) in respect of the rate set out in regulation 3(1) of the Bereavement Support Payment Regulations 2017, and

(b) paid as a lump sum for more than one monthly recurrence of the day of the month on which their cohabiting partner died,

but only for a period of 52 weeks beginning with the date of receipt of the payment or 1st April 2024, whichever is later.”.

Amendments from 01/04/2026

We are changing the regulation to simplify when entitlement can start following a death or separation. Reg 107 will be amended as follows:

original:

(6) Where the change of circumstances is the death of an applicant’s partner or their separation, it takes effect on the day the death or separation occurs.

(a) Where the applicant was included as “the partner” of the deceased (or ex-partners) Council Tax Support entitlement at date of death or separation, The Council Tax Liability created following the death of an applicant’s partner or their separation falls to be treated as “first liable” within Reg 105 (2) of this scheme.

Amended:

(6) Where the change of circumstances is the death of an applicant’s partner or their separation, it takes effect on the day the death or separation occurs.

(a) The Council Tax Liability created following the death of an applicant’s partner or their separation falls to be treated as “first liable” within Reg 105 (2) of this scheme.

Amendments are also being made to reg 110 to allow for more scope for delays in claiming if it is deemed reasonable for them to have taken longer than a month. We will be adding/amending the parts currently coloured red:

110. Date on which an application is made

(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (7), the date on which an application is made is— (a) in a case where—

(i)an award of state pension credit which comprises a guarantee credit has been made to the applicant or his partner, and

(ii)the application is made within one month of the date on which the claim for that state pension credit which comprises a guarantee credit was received at the appropriate DWP office, **or such longer period as the relevant authority considers reasonable**, the first day of entitlement to state pension credit which comprises a guarantee credit arising from that claim,;

(b)in a case where—

(i)an applicant or his partner is a person in receipt of a guarantee credit,

(ii)the applicant becomes liable for the first time to pay council tax in respect of the dwelling which he occupies as his home, and

(iii)the application to the authority is received at the designated office within one month of the date of the change, **or such longer period as the relevant authority considers reasonable**, the date on which the change takes place;

(c)in a case where—

(i)an award of income support, an income-based jobseeker's allowance or an income-related employment and support allowance or an award of universal credit has been made to the applicant or his partner, and

(ii)the application is made within one month of the date on which the claim for that income support, jobseeker's allowance, employment and support allowance or universal credit was received, the first day of entitlement to income support, an income-based jobseeker's allowance, an income-related employment and support allowance or universal credit arising from that claim, **or such longer period as the relevant authority considers reasonable**;

(d)in a case where—

(i)an applicant or his partner is a person on income support, an income-based jobseeker's allowance or an income-related employment and support allowance or has an award of universal credit,

(ii)the applicant becomes liable for the first time to pay council tax in respect of the dwelling which he occupies as his home, and

(iii)the application to the authority is received at the designated office within one month of the date of the change, **or such longer period as the relevant authority considers reasonable**, the date on which the change takes place;

(e)in a case where—

(i)the applicant is the former partner of a person who was ... liable for Council Tax.

(ii)where the applicant makes an application **(for the same property)** for a reduction under this scheme within one month of the date of the death or the separation, **or such longer period as the relevant authority considers reasonable**, the date of the death or separation;

SUMMARY OF CHANGES FROM 01.04.13

Current Council Tax Benefit Scheme (CTB)	Council Tax Support (CTS)
Second Adult Rebate - Awarded to the customer based on the circumstances of 'second adult'. Can be awarded due to a 'better buy' comparison	No award due for second person. On 'better buy' calculation customer will only be awarded any CTS due.
Reduction of the capital limit - Upper capital limit of £16,000. Above this limit the person would not qualify for CTB. Lower capital of £6,000. Below this figure amount is ignored. Amounts above £6,000 attract tariff income at £1 for every £250 or part of above the lower capital limit	Upper capital limit of £10,000. Above this limit the person would not qualify for CTB. Lower capital of £6,000. Below this figure amount is ignored. Amounts above £6,000 attract tariff income at £1 for every £250 or part of above the lower capital limit
Removal of earnings disregards – Permitted work - £97.50 Lone parents - £25.00 Disabled, carers or special occupations - £20.00 Couples - £10 Single £5	Permitted work - £0 Lone parents - £0 Disabled, carers or special occupations - £0 Couples - £0 Single £0
Removal of Child Benefit disregard – Child Benefit is fully disregarded for the calculation of CTB	Child benefit is fully included for the calculation of CTS
Increase in non-dependant deductions (using current figures) On pass ported benefit - £0.00 On JSA C/ESAC - £3.30 Works less than 16 hours on maternity, paternity, adoption or sick leave - £3.30 Income more than £394.00 per week – £9.90 £316.00 to £393.99 per week – £8.25 £238.00 to £315.99 per week - £6.55 £183.00 to £237.00 per week - £3.30 £124.00 to £182.99 per week – £3.30 Under £124.00 – £3.30	On pass ported benefit - £0.00 On JSA C/ESAC - £3.30 Works less than 16 hours on maternity, paternity, adoption or sick leave - £3.30 Earnings less than £100 - £5.00 Earnings between £100 and £150 - £10.00 Earnings above £150 - £20.00

APPEALS

There will be no joint HB/CTR appeals – they will be heard separately by different bodies. First Tier Tribunals will hear the Housing Benefit appeals (as now) and the Valuation Tribunals Service will hear Council Tax Support appeals.

The legislation is contained within the Local Government Finance Act. Appeals against the local Council Tax Support Scheme will be covered by Regulation 16(b).

Process:

- The customer firstly needs to write to the Council saying they disagree with the decision. There is no time limit to do this. They can request this at any time.
- If we do not alter our original decision the customer has the right to appeal to the Valuation Tribunal.
- To appeal to the Valuation Tribunal the customer will need to do this on line at www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk
- The customer must complete the on line appeal application within two months of the date of the decision notice sent by ourselves upholding the original decision

As local schemes are not legislation, but are locally defined schemes, the Valuation Tribunal will not consider an appeal against a billing authority's actual scheme, as that is beyond their jurisdiction. However, the Valuation Tribunal will advise dissatisfied claimants of their right to apply to the billing authority for a discretionary discount under section 13 (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. They will also hear appeals where the authority refuses to exercise this discretion.

Discretionary Discount Policies

1. Second Homes

- 1.1. Second homes are defined as furnished properties which are not occupied as a person's main residence and include furnished properties that are unoccupied between tenancies.
- 1.2. The Local Government Act 2003 gave councils new discretionary powers to reduce the 50% Council Tax discount previously awarded in respect of second homes to between 10% and 50% with effect from 1st April 2004. Councils retain the additional income raised by reducing the second homes Council Tax discount.
- 1.3. The Local Government Act 2012 further extended billing authorities' discretion over the second homes discount to between 0% and 50%. On 17 October 2012 Cabinet approved the reduction of the second homes Council Tax discount from 10% to 0%.
- 1.4. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 passed in October 2023 enables billing authorities to introduce a council tax premium of up to 100% in respect of second homes.
- 1.5. On 14 December 2023 Council approved the introduction of a council tax premium of 100% in respect of second homes from 1 April 2025.
- 1.6. The figures used for the 2026/27 Council Tax taxbase incorporate a 100% Council Tax premium in respect of second homes (other than those that retain a 50% discount through regulation as a result of job-related protection). Implementation of this policy results in the inclusion of 1,390.00 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation.

2. Vacant Properties – Former Class A & Class C Exempt Properties

- 2.1. The Local Government Act 2012 abolished both Class A and Class C exemptions and gave billing authorities' discretion to give discounts of between 0% and 100%. Class A exemptions were previously available for up to 12 months in respect of a vacant property which required, was undergoing, or had recently undergone major repair work to render it habitable, or a structural alteration. Class C exemptions were previously available for up to six months after a dwelling became vacant.
- 2.2. On 14 December 2017 Council approved the removal of a 50% Council Tax discount in respect of vacant dwellings undergoing major repair, i.e. former Class A exempt properties.

- 2.3. In respect of former Class A exempt properties the figures used for the 2026/27 Council Tax taxbase allow for the continuation of the decision previously approved by Council, i.e. to award no discount.
- 2.4. On 17 October 2012 Cabinet approved the award of a 25% Council Tax discount in respect of vacant dwellings, i.e. former Class C exempt properties.
- 2.5. Implementation of this policy resulted in a large number of low value Council Tax demands being raised primarily in relation to landlords whose properties are between tenants. A significant number of landlord complaints were received in relation to these Council Tax demands and these small amounts proved to be very difficult to collect. It was, therefore, proposed and approved that a 100% discount be awarded for one month, i.e. effectively reinstating the exemption, and then a 25% discount be awarded for the remaining five months.
- 2.6. In order to avoid fraudulent 100% claims in respect of these types of properties it was also proposed and approved that the “six week rule” be applied, i.e. if a dwelling which is unoccupied and unfurnished is either exempt or entitled to a discount, becomes occupied or substantially furnished for a period of less than six weeks, after which it falls empty again, it will only resume exemption or discount for any of the original exemption or discount period which remains.
- 2.7. On 14 December 2017 Council approved the continuation of the policy to award one month exemption when a property becomes unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (subject to the six week rule) and approved a revised policy to remove the 25% for the following five months. This means that when a property becomes unoccupied and substantially unfurnished it would attract one month exemption, then pay full charge for the following twenty three months, then attract an additional 100% council tax premium after two years.
- 2.8. In respect of former Class C exempt properties the figures used for the 2026/27 Council Tax taxbase incorporate a discount of 100% for one month. Continuation of this policy to award the one month exemption results in the exclusion of 243.34 Band D equivalents from the taxbase calculation.

3. Vacant Properties – Empty Homes Premium

- 3.1. The Local Government Act 2012 amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and also gave billing authorities’ discretion to levy an empty homes premium of 50% after a dwelling has been empty and substantially unfurnished for at least two years. In December 2013 Shropshire Council chose to enact this discretionary power with effect from April 2014.
- 3.2. On 1 November 2018 the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 was passed which further amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992. This gave billing authorities’ discretion to levy an

empty homes premium of 100% from 1 April 2019 after a dwelling has been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least two years, a 200% premium from 1 April 2020 for properties unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least 5 years and a 300% premium from 1 April 2021 for properties unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least 10 years.

3.3. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 passed in October 2023 further enhanced charging options with effect from 1 April 2024. The Act enables billing authorities to reduce the minimum period for the implementation of the council tax premium for long term empty premises from two years to one year.

3.4. The figures used for the 2026/27 Council Tax taxbase incorporate a 100% Council Tax premium in respect of dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than one year, a 200% Council Tax premium in respect of dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than five years and a 300% Council Tax premium in respect of dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than ten years. Implementation of this policy results in the inclusion of 859.89 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation in relation to properties unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than one year, 194.22 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation in relation to properties unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than five years and 202.66 Band D equivalents in the taxbase calculation in relation to properties unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than ten years.

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Committee and Date

Audit and Governance
Committee
27th November 2025

Cabinet
3rd December 2025

Council
11th December 2025

Item

Public



Treasury Strategy 2025/26 Mid-Year Review

Responsible Officer:	James Walton	
email:	james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk	
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Roger Evans, Finance	

1. Synopsis

As at 30 September 2025 the Council held £44.1m in investments and had £420m of borrowing. The report confirms compliance with Treasury and Prudential limits agreed by Full Council.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This mid-year Treasury Strategy report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2017 and covers the following:
- An economic update for the first six months of 2025/26
 - A review of the Treasury Strategy 2025/26 and Annual Investment Strategy
 - A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2025/26
 - A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2025/26
 - A review of any debt rescheduling taken
 - A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential limits for 2025/26

3. Recommendations

Members of the Audit Committee, Cabinet and Council are asked to:

- 3.1. Agree the Treasury Strategy activity as set out in the report.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 4.2. There are no direct environmental, equalities or climate change consequences arising from this report.
- 4.3. The main risk relating to undertaking Treasury Management activities is a potential financial loss and this is considered in the table below:

Risk	Mitigation
Potential financial loss arising from undertaking Treasury Management activities	All Treasury Management practices are in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council's Treasury Policy Statement, and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance, together with rigorous internal controls.
	Council's Audit Committee is the committee responsible for ensuring effective consideration of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and policies

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands and a financial emergency was declared by Cabinet on 10 September 2025. The overall financial position of the Council is set out in the monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. Significant management action has been instigated at all levels of the Council reducing spend to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all reports to Members provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers and/or Portfolio Holders review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. All non-essential spend will be stopped and all essential spend challenged. These actions may involve (this is not exhaustive):
 - scaling down initiatives,
 - changing the scope of activities,
 - delaying implementation of agreed plans, or
 - extending delivery timescales.

- 5.2. The Council makes assumptions about the levels of borrowing and investment income over the financial year. Reduced borrowing as a result of capital receipt generation or delays in delivery of the capital programme will both have a positive impact on the council's cash position. Similarly, higher than benchmarked returns on available cash will also help the Council's financial position. For monitoring purposes, assumptions are made early in year about borrowing and returns based on the strategies agreed by Council in the preceding February. Performance outside of these assumptions results in increased or reduced income for the Council.
- 5.3. The 2025/26 six-month performance is marginally below benchmark but has delivered net income of £1.346m.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. The Council's Financial Strategy includes proposals to deliver a reduced carbon footprint for the Council therefore the Treasury Team is working with the Council to achieve this. There are no direct climate change impacts arising from this report. Shropshire Council's investment portfolio has no level 1, 2 or 3 emissions. It comprises of straightforward cash deposits with financial institutions and other Local Authorities.

7. Background

- 7.1. The Council defines its treasury management activities as "the management of the authority's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with the activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks." Broadly, cash received by the Council raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Treasury Management operations ensure this cash flow is planned and managed. Temporary surplus balances are invested in low-risk counterparties (providing security), ensuring cash availability (liquidity), and only considering investment return (yield) last.
- 7.2. Cash flow management covers in-year (revenue) costs as well as the funding of the Council's long term (capital) plans. Capital plans provide a guide to the future borrowing need of the Council and may involve arranging long or short-term borrowing. Occasionally existing debt may be restructured as opportunities allow.
- 7.3. In December 2017, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. As from 2019/20, all local authorities are required to prepare a Capital Strategy which is intended to provide the following: -
- A high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services
 - An overview of how associated risk is managed
 - The implications for future financial sustainability

7.4. A report setting out the Council's Capital Strategy was taken to full Council in February 2024. This report informs Members of the treasury activities of the Council for the first six months of the financial year.

7.5. To secure specialist advice on long-term borrowing and investment, the Council works with MUFG Corporate Markets (MUFG), who provide the detailed analysis set out in this report.

8. Economic Update and Forecast

- 8.1. Since the Council's Treasury and Capital strategies were agreed in February 2025, there has been further change in terms of the economic environment. The Bank of England has initiated its easing cycle by lowering interest rates from bank base rate has reduced over the period from 4.50% to 4.00%. A detailed commentary can be found in Appendix D.
- 8.2. MUFG forecast interest rates over the next 36 months. Their latest interest rate forecasts are shown below.

MUFG Corporate Markets Interest Rate View 11.08.25													
	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28
BANK RATE	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
3 month ave earnings	4.00	4.00	3.80	3.80	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
6 month ave earnings	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.40	3.40	3.40
12 month ave earnings	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.60
5 yr PWLB	4.80	4.70	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10
10 yr PWLB	5.30	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.80	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.60
25 yr PWLB	6.10	5.90	5.70	5.70	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20
50 yr PWLB	5.80	5.60	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.20	5.10	5.10	5.00	5.00

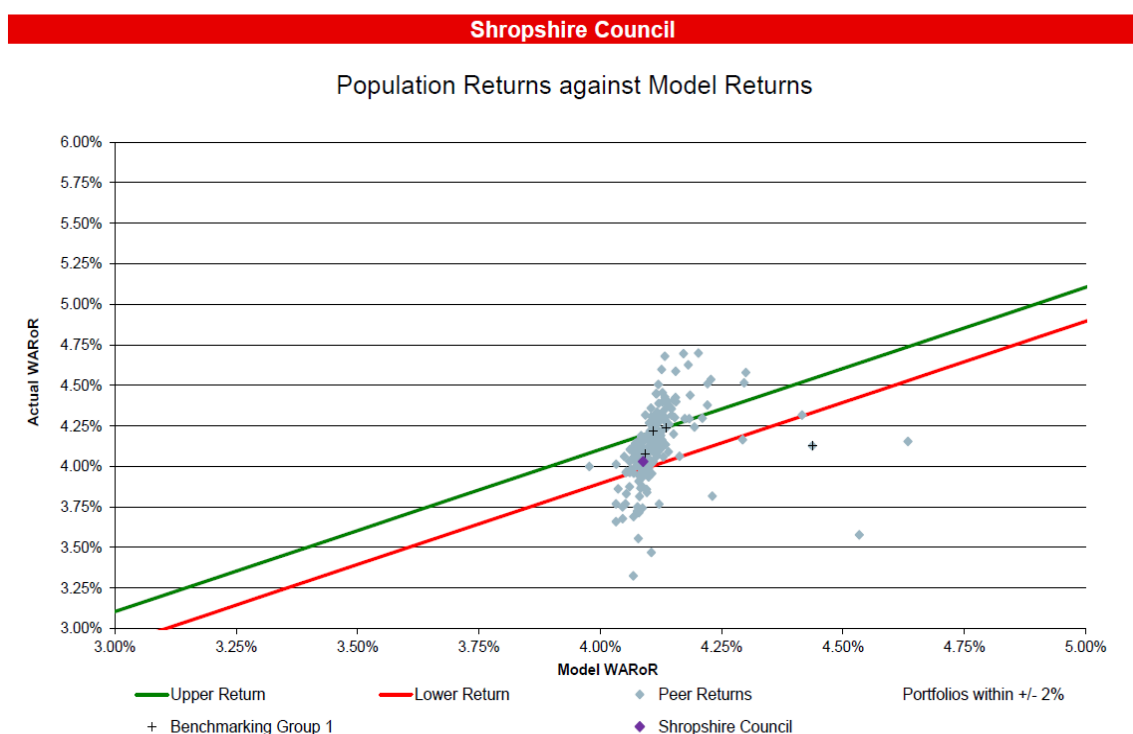
9. Treasury Strategy Update

- 9.1. The Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) for 2025/26 was approved by Full Council on 27 February 2025. There are no policy changes, or any changes required to the prudential and treasury indicators previously approved. The details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic position.

10. Annual Investment Strategy

- 10.1. The Council's Annual Investment Strategy, which is incorporated in the TMS, outlines the Council's investment priorities as the security and liquidity of its capital. In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to keep investments short term to cover cash flow needs, but also to seek out value available in periods up to 12 months with high credit quality financial institutions, using the MUFG suggested creditworthiness approach, including a minimum sovereign credit rating and Credit Default Swap (CDS) overlay information.
- 10.2. The average level of funds available for investment purposes during the first half of the financial year was £64.430m. These funds were available on a temporary basis, and the level of funds available was mainly dependent on the timing of precept payments, receipt of grants and progress on the capital programme.

10.3. In the first six months of 2025/26 the internal finance team's return achieved was marginally lower than its benchmark by 0.07%. The gross investment return was 4.18% compared to the benchmark of 4.25%. As cash balances held are lower than in previous years, the Council need to ensure cash balances are highly liquid, resulting in lower interest rates on short term deals. Whilst returns on investment are important, as we strive to achieve the best investment we can, the Council's priority is always to ensure security of funds and ensure we hold sufficient liquid balances. With this in mind, this will often mean that we cannot secure the higher rate investments as these are offered to longer term deals. The Council does receive benchmarking analysis of its investments in relation to its comparative group and throughout the second quarter of 2025/26, its performance on investment were considered in line with the other organisations.



10.4. A full list of investments held as at 30 September 2025, compared to MUFG's counterparty list, and changes to Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's credit ratings are shown within MUFG's Monthly Investment Analysis Review at Appendix 1. None of the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were breached during the first half of 2025/26. Officers continue to monitor the credit ratings of institutions on a daily basis. Delegated authority has been put in place to make any amendments to the approved lending list.

10.5. Recent investment rates available in the market have decreased due to the central bank rate reducing to 4.00% in August 2025.

10.6. The interest receivable budget is expected to deliver, as a minimum, net income of £1.346m in the first six months of the year. Projections on income will be reviewed monthly. The current estimates are based on assumptions of the value of investment balances.

11. Borrowing

11.1. Details of the Council's borrowing activity can be found within Appendix D.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Treasury Strategy 2025/26 – Council, 27 February 2025

Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2029/30 – Council, 27 February 2025

Local Member: N/A

Appendices

Appendix A – Investment Report as at 30 September 2025

Appendix B – Prudential Limits

Appendix C – Prudential Borrowing Schedule

Appendix D – Economic Background and Borrowing Update



Shropshire Council

Monthly Investment Analysis Review

September 2025

Monthly Economic Summary

General Economy

The UK Manufacturing PMI fell to 46.2 in September, down from 47.0 in August and below market expectations of 47.1 signalling the steepest contraction in the sector since April. Firms cited weak domestic and export orders, including specific disruptions in the automotive supply chain due to plant stoppages at Jaguar Land Rover. Employment continued to decline whilst factory gate price inflation eased to its lowest level since December 2024, reflecting intense competitive pressures. Despite the contraction, business confidence reached its highest level since February, supported by increased investment and hopes for a rebound in order books. The S&P Global Flash UK Services PMI fell to 51.9 in September from 54.2 in August which was the highest since April 2024, and well below forecasts of 53.5. Strong business and consumer spending was not enough to overcome subdued UK economic conditions and heightened economic uncertainty. Service providers again recorded a particularly steep rise in their operating expenses, which was attributed to elevated wage pressures and efforts by suppliers to pass on higher payroll costs. There were also reports of rising energy bills, food prices and technology costs.

Combining the above left the UK Composite PMI at 51 in September, down from the one-year high of 53.5 in the previous month and missing the market consensus of 53 to reflect the slowest pace of expansion in private sector activity since May. New work at the aggregate level inched higher amid subdued export sales to the US and EU, as firms reported a lack of willingness-to-spend by clients, driving firms to depend on backlogs to sustain output. In the meantime, cost burdens rose sharply in the period due to wage pressures that have risen on more contributions to National Insurance, driving firms to increase their prices charged. Consequently, the employment subcomponent decreased for an eleventh straight month. Separately, the UK Construction PMI rose to 45.5 in August, from an over five-year low of 44.3 in July and slightly above market forecasts of 45. A slower contraction in commercial building helped offset sharper falls in residential and civil engineering work, with housing activity posting its steepest drop since February and civil engineering its worst since October 2020.

The UK economy stalled in July, in line with expectations, after expanding 0.4% in June. Services edged up 0.1% and construction also rose 0.2%. These gains were countered by a 0.9% fall in production with manufacturing down 1.3%. On the year, GDP grew 1.4%, the same pace as in June but slightly below expectations of 1.5%. Elsewhere, the UK's trade deficit widened to £5.3 billion in July, up from £5.01 billion in June and marked the largest gap since February. Exports rose by 2.3% m/m to £76.5 billion, while imports grew by 2.4% to a record high of £81.71 billion. Goods exports increased by 6.6%, supported by a 4.6% rise in shipments to the EU primarily due to a surge in aircraft exports to Germany. On the import side, goods activity advanced by 3.9% to a 13-month high of £50.9 billion, mainly due to increased imports of ships from South Korea and aircraft and cars from Germany. Meanwhile, services imports edged down by 0.1% to £28.8 billion.

The UK recorded a 232k rise in employment in the three months to July, coming above forecasts of 220k largely supported by full-time positions. The employment rate for those aged 16 to 64 edged up by 0.1 percentage points to 75.2%. The number of people holding second jobs also grew, reaching 1.301 million, equivalent to 3.8% of total employment. Meanwhile, total average weekly earnings (including bonuses) rose 4.7% y/y to £727 per week in the three months to July 2025 in line with forecasts. Private sector wage growth eased, and a small slowdown was also seen for the public sector. Adjusted for inflation, total earnings increased 0.5%, the same as in the previous period.

The Consumer Price Index increased 0.3% m/m in August, after a 0.1% rise in July and matching market expectations. The UK's annual inflation rate held steady at 3.8% in August, remaining near the highs last seen in January 2024. Inflation slowed for transport, with prices for air fares falling 3.5% and making the largest downward contribution...reversing the spike higher seen earlier in the summer due to the timing of this year's school holidays. Inflation was also lower for services, recreation and culture, clothing and footwear and steadied for housing and utilities. On the other hand, the largest upward contribution came from motor fuels.

The GfK Consumer Confidence Index slipped to -19 in September from -17 in August, as worries over looming tax hikes weighed on sentiment. All five

Shropshire Council

Current Investment List

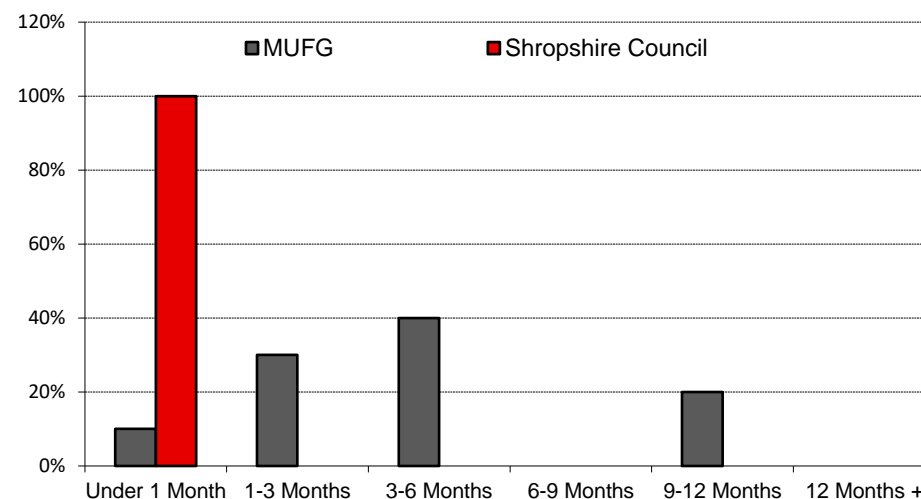
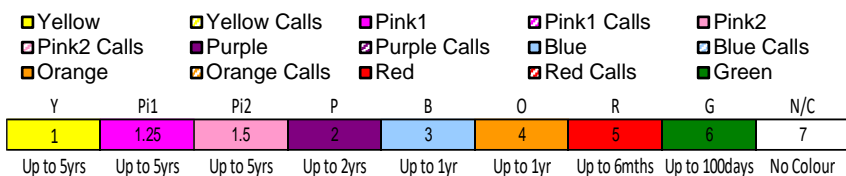
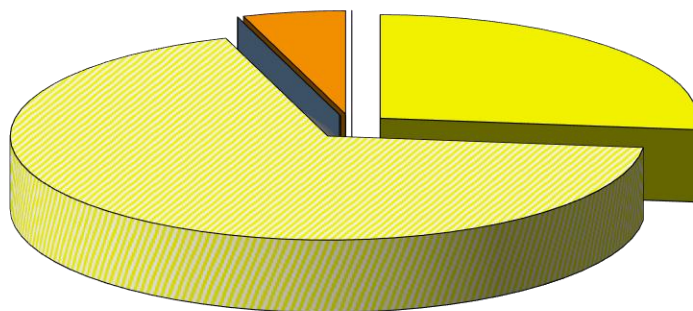
	Borrower	Principal (£)	Interest Rate	Start Date	Maturity Date	Lowest LT / Fund Rating	Historic Risk of Default	Expected Credit Loss (£)
	MMF Aberdeen Standard Investments	15,000,000	4.07%		MMF	AAAm		
	MMF Insight	15,000,000	4.06%		MMF	AAAm		
	National Westminster Bank Plc (RFB)	2,300,000	4.01%	10/09/2025	30/10/2025	A+	0.004%	87
	DMO	2,900,000	3.95%	26/09/2025	02/10/2025	AA-	0.000%	0
	DMO	2,300,000	3.95%	29/09/2025	06/10/2025	AA-	0.000%	0
	DMO	6,600,000	3.95%	30/09/2025	01/10/2025	AA-	0.000%	0
	Total Investments	£44,100,000	4.03%					£87

Note: An historic risk of default is only provided if a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and is not provided for an MMF or USDBF, for which the rating agencies provide a fund rating. The portfolio's historic risk of default therefore measures the historic risk of default attached only to those investments for which a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and also does not include investments which are not rated.

The Historic Risk of Default column is based on the lowest long term rating. If clients are using this % for their Expected Credit Loss calculation under IFRS 9, please be aware that the Code does not recognise a loss allowance where the counterparty is central government or a local authority since relevant statutory provisions prevent default. For these instruments, the Expected Credit Loss will be nil. Please note that we are currently using Historic Default Rates from 1990-2024 for Fitch, 1983-2024 for Moody's and 1981-2024 for S&P.

Where MUFG Corporate Markets have provided a return for a property fund, that return covers the 12 months to June 2025, which are the latest returns currently available.

Portfolio Composition by MUFG's Suggested Lending Criteria



Portfolios weighted average risk number = 1.16

WARoR = Weighted Average Rate of Return

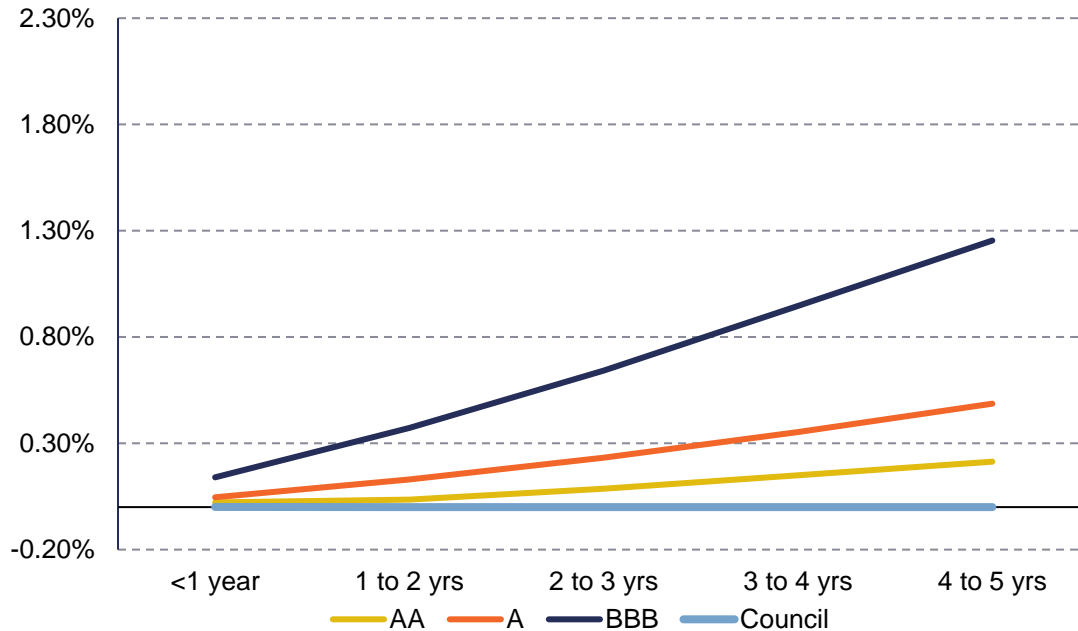
WAM = Weighted Average Time to Maturity

	Excluding Calls/MMFs/USDBFs									
	% of Portfolio	Amount	% of Colour in Calls	Amount of Colour in Calls	% of Call in Portfolio	WARoR	WAM	WAM at Execution	WAM	WAM at Execution
Yellow	94.78%	£41,800,000	71.77%	£30,000,000	68.03%	4.03%	1	1	2	3
Pink1	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Pink2	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Purple	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Blue	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Orange	5.22%	£2,300,000	0.00%	£0	0.00%	4.01%	30	50	30	50
Red	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Green	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
No Colour	0.00%	£0	0.00%	£0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Total	100.00%	£44,100,000	68.03%	£30,000,000	68.03%	4.03%	2	4	7	11

Shropshire Council

Investment Risk and Rating Exposure

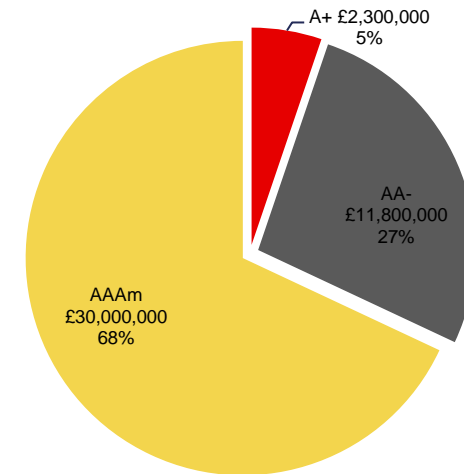
Investment Risk Vs. Rating Categories



Historic Risk of Default

Rating/Years	<1 year	1 to 2 yrs	2 to 3 yrs	3 to 4 yrs	4 to 5 yrs
AA	0.02%	0.04%	0.09%	0.15%	0.21%
A	0.05%	0.13%	0.23%	0.35%	0.49%
BBB	0.14%	0.37%	0.64%	0.95%	1.25%
Council	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Rating Exposure



Historic Risk of Default

This is a proxy for the average % risk for each investment based on over 30 years of data provided by Fitch, Moody's and S&P. It simply provides a calculation of the possibility of average default against the historical default rates, adjusted for the time period within each year according to the maturity of the investment.

Chart Relative Risk

This is the authority's risk weightings compared to the average % risk of default for "AA", "A" and "BBB" rated investments.

Rating Exposures

This pie chart provides a clear view of your investment exposures to particular ratings.

Note: An historic risk of default is only provided if a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and is not provided for an MMF or USDBF, for which the rating agencies provide a fund rating. The portfolio's historic risk of default therefore measures the historic risk of default attached only to those investments for which a counterparty has a counterparty credit rating and also does not include investments which are not rated.

Shropshire Council

Monthly Credit Rating Changes FITCH

Date	Update Number	Institution	Country	Rating Action
15/09/2025	2093	France (Sovereign)	France	The Sovereign Rating was downgraded to 'A+' from 'AA-' and the Outlook on the Sovereign Rating was changed to Stable from Negative.
25/09/2025	2095	Coventry Building Society	United Kingdom	The Outlook on the Long Term Rating was changed to Stable from Negative.

Shropshire Council

Monthly Credit Rating Changes S&P

Date	Update Number	Institution	Country	Rating Action
26/09/2025	2096	Swedbank AB	Sweden	The Long Term and Short Term Ratings were upgraded to 'AA-' from 'A+' and to 'A-1+' from 'A-1' respectively. The Outlook on the Long Term Rating was also changed to Stable from Positive.

Shropshire Council

Monthly Credit Rating Changes MOODY'S

Date	Update Number	Institution	Country	Rating Action
16/09/2025	2094	Toronto-Dominion Bank	Canada	The Long Term Rating was upgraded to 'Aa1' from 'Aa2'. The Long Term Rating was also placed on Stable Outlook and removed from Positive Watch.

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APPENDIX B – PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR QUARTER 2

Prudential Indicator	2025/26 Indicator £m	Quarter 1 – Actual £m	Quarter 2 – Actual £m	Quarter 3 – Actual £m	Quarter 4 – Actual £m
Non HRA Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	455	317	317		
HRA CFR	111	103	103		
Gross borrowing	566	420	420		
Investments	75	39	44		
Net borrowing	491	381	376		
Authorised limit for external debt	748	420	420		
Operational boundary for external debt	660	420	420		
Limit of fixed interest rates (borrowing)	748	420	420		
Limit of variable interest rates (borrowing)	374	0	0		
Internal Team Principal sums invested > 364 days	70	0	0		
Maturity structure of borrowing limits	%	%	%	%	%
Under 12 months	25	19	19		
12 months to 2 years	25	16	16		
2 years to 5 years	50	3	3		
5 years to 10 years	75	21	21		
10 years to 20 years	100	14	14		
20 years to 30 years	100	18	18		
30 years to 40 years	100	4	4		
40 years to 50 years	100	3	3		
50 years and above	100	2	2		

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APPENDIX C -PRUDENTIAL BORROWING APPROVALS

Prudential Borrowing Approvals	Date Approved	Amount Approved £	Applied (Spent) 2006/07 £	Applied (Spent) 2007/08 £	Applied (Spent) 2008/09 £	Applied (Spent) 2009/10 £	Applied (Spent) 2010/11 £	Applied (Spent) 2011/12 £	Applied (Spent) 2012/13 £	Applied (Spent) 2013/14 £	Applied (Spent) 2014/15 £	Applied (Spent) 2015/16 £	Applied (Spent) 2016/17 £	Applied (Spent) 2017/18 £	Applied (Spent) 2018/19 £	Applied (Spent) 2019/20 £	Applied (Spent) 2020/21 £	Applied (Spent) 2021/22 £	Applied (Spent) 2022/23 £	Applied (Spent) 2023/24 £	Applied (Spent) 2024/25 £	Budgeted 2025/26 £	Budgeted 2026/27 £	Budgeted 2027/28 £	Budgeted 2028/29 £	First year MRP Charged	Asset Life	Final year MRP Charged		
Monkmoor Campus	24/02/2006	3,580,000																												
Capital Receipts Shortfall -Cashflow	24/02/2006	5,000,000																												
Applied:																														
Monkmoor Campus			3,000,000		0																							2007/08	25	2031/32
William Brooks					0		3,580,000																					2011/12	25	2035/36
Tem Valley					2,000,000																							2010/11	35	2044/45
		8,580,000	3,000,000	0	2,000,000	0	3,580,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Highways	24/02/2006	2,000,000	2,000,000																									2007/08	20	2026/27
Accommodation Changes	24/02/2006	650,000	410,200	39,800																								2007/08	6	2012/13
Accommodation Changes - Saving	31/03/2007	(200,000)																												
		450,000	410,200	39,800	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
The Ptarmigan Building	05/11/2009	3,744,000				3,744,000																						2010/11	25	2034/35
The Mount McKinley Building	05/11/2009	2,782,000				2,782,000																						2011/12	25	2035/36
The Mount McKinley Building	05/11/2009	0					0																					2011/12	5	2015/16
Capital Strategy Schemes - Potential Capital Receipts shortfall																														
- Desktop Virtualisation	25/02/2010	187,600					187,600	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0												25		
								0																				2010/11	5	2014/15
Carbon Efficiency Schemes/Self Financing	25/02/2010	1,512,442					115,656	1,312,810	83,976	0	0	0	0	0	0	0												2011/12	5	2017/18
Transformation schemes		92,635						92,635	0	0																		2012/13	3	2014/15
Renewables - Biomass - Self Financing	14/09/2011	92,990						82,406	98,258	-87,670	0																	2014/15	25	2038/39
Solar PV Council Buildings - Self Financing	11/05/2011	56,342						1,283,959	124,584	-1,352,202	0																	2013/14	25	2038/39
Depot Redevelopment - Self Financing	23/02/2012	0							0	0	0																	2014/15	10	2023/24
Oswestry Leisure Centre Equipment - Self Financing	04/04/2012	124,521						124,521																				2012/13	5	2016/17
Leisure Services - Self Financing	01/08/2012	711,197							711,197																			2013/14	5	2016/17
Mardol House Acquisition	26/02/2015	4,160,000								4,160,000	0																	2015/16	25	2039/40
Mardol House Adaptation and Refit	26/02/2015	3,340,000								167,641	3,172,359	0	0	0	0	0												2016/17	25	2041/42
Oswestry Leisure Centre Equipment - Self Financing	01/08/2012	290,274									274,239					16,035												2018/19	5	2022/23
Car Parking Strategy Implementation	17/01/2018	590,021										588,497		1,524														2020/21	5	2024/25
JPUT - Investment in Units re Shrewsbury Shopping Centres	13/12/2017	55,299,533											52,204,603	-208,569	2,791,967	320,079	191,453											2018/19	45	2042/43
JPUT - SSC No 1 Ltd	13/12/2017	527,319										527,319																		
CDL Shareholding	28/02/2019	1															1											2021/22		
Children's Residential Care	28/02/2019	1,999,999											1,381,539	230,765	38,487	316,210	33,000											2020/21	25	2044/45
Pride Hill Shopping Centre Reconfiguration - LEP Match	19/12/2019	1,928,978														434,027	842,293	652,658										AUC	45	2070/71
Pride Hill Shopping Centre Reconfiguration - Feb 22 approval	01/02/2022	2,377,000																197,614	1,076,307	250,423	838,702							AUC	45	2070/71
Pride Hill Phase 1 Enabling Works	01/02/2022	0																			13,955							AUC	45	2070/71
Multi Agency Hub - Feb 22 approval	01/02/2022	3,146,000																				3,146,000						AUC	45	2070/71
Greenacres Supported Living Development	24/09/2020	-																34,317	41,688	1,979	-77,983							N/A	N/A	N/A

Prudential Borrowing Approvals	Date Approved	Amount Approved £	Applied (Spent) 2006/07 £	Applied (Spent) 2007/08 £	Applied (Spent) 2008/09 £	Applied (Spent) 2009/10 £	Applied (Spent) 2010/11 £	Applied (Spent) 2011/12 £	Applied (Spent) 2012/13 £	Applied (Spent) 2013/14 £	Applied (Spent) 2014/15 £	Applied (Spent) 2015/16 £	Applied (Spent) 2016/17 £	Applied (Spent) 2017/18 £	Applied (Spent) 2018/19 £	Applied (Spent) 2019/20 £	Applied (Spent) 2020/21 £	Applied (Spent) 2021/22 £	Applied (Spent) 2022/23 £	Applied (Spent) 2023/24 £	Applied (Spent) 2024/25 £	Budgeted 2025/26 £	Budgeted 2026/27 £	Budgeted 2027/28 £	Budgeted 2028/29 £	First year MRP Charged 2023/24	Asset Life 25	Final year MRP Charged 2044/45	
Bishops Castle Business Park	19/09/2019	2,874,695															2,900	1,545,647	1,271,102	55,046							2023/24	25	2044/45
Development)	26/07/2018	3,778,228																	171,509	1,392,326	1,644,315	570,078					2023/24	25	2047/48
Oswestry Castleview - Site Acquisition	19/12/2019	3,256,241														3,256,241											2020/21	25	2044/45
Former Morrisons Site, Oswestry	19/09/2019	3,390,145															3,390,145										2021/22	25	2045/46
Meole Brace Pitch & Putt		5,400,000																11,927	136,349	263,137	244,820	1,543,788	3,200,000				AUC	25	
Maesbury Solar Farm		2,041,173																	19,682	26,876	35,826	1,458,789	500,000				AUC	25	
Commercial Investment Fund	Fin Strat	1,764,234																					52,415	232,340	1,479,479		2021/22	25	2044/45
The Tannery Development Block A - Land Acquisition		657,253																62,500	594,753								2022/23	25	2045/46
The Tannery Development Block A		6,356,606																				5,150	351,456	3,500,000	2,500,000		AUC		
The Tannery Development - Block B & C		7,471,561													3,677,844	3,456,019	311,325	16,614	3,847	5,912							2019/20	25	2045/46
Oswestry Property Acquisition	12/05/2022	3,332,304																		3,332,304							2023/24	25	2047/48
Shrewsbury Property Acquisition		3,837,012																		3,837,012							2023/24	25	2047/48
Biochar Pyrolysis - Project 1		535,000																				50,906	484,094				2026/27	25	2047/48
Biodynamic Carbon (BDC) Limited Share Holding		500																				500					2025/26	25	
Biodynamic Carbon (BDC) Limited Working Capital Investment		9,500																				9,500					2025/26	25	
Biochar Pyrolysis - Project 2		2,751,000																			9,420	227,809	1,213,771	1,300,000			2026/27	25	
Biochar Pyrolysis - Project Framework		4,000																				4,000					2025/26		
Recycling Bin Roll Out Programme		2,029,778																4,395	2,025,384								2022/23	10	2032/33
Highways Investment Programme	Capital Strat Feb 22	22,954,755																3,983,412	18,011,589			786,754	173,000				2022/23	25	2046/47
Oswestry Innovation Park		10,028,332																			4,218,112	3,060,927	713,000	2,036,293			2022/23	25	2046/47
Cambrian Building Oswestry - UKSPF		270,107																			14,900	142,650	112,557				2022/23	25	2046/47
Whitchurch Swimming & Leisure Facility	22/09/2022	13,100,282																			390,954	3,010,525	9,390,291	308,513			2026/27	40	2065/66
Previous NSDC Borrowing		955,595			821,138	134,457																					2009/10	5/25	2065/66
Capital Receipts Released By Additional Borrowing		8,226,507																			8,226,507						2024/25	257	2048/49
Shrewsbury Sports Village - Swimming Pool	26/09/2024	2,248,000																				440,011	1,807,989				AUC		
Plamigan Building FRA & Refurbishment Works		415,245																				387,660	27,585				2025/26	10	2035/36
Transformation Programme 2024-25 Expenditure Funded Through Borrowing Under EFS Approval		26,819,527																				26,819,527					2025/26	257	
		228,500,436	5,410,200	39,800	2,821,138	6,848,057	3,695,656	2,896,333	1,018,015	-1,439,872	4,327,641	3,172,359	0	53,006,161	4,057,772	10,903,324	4,689,243	6,731,044	31,002,652	18,334,046	43,437,041	12,801,716	10,768,633	3,979,479	0				

Economic Background and Borrowing Update

Economic Background

The first half of 2025/26 saw:

- A 0.3% pick up in GDP for the period April to June 2025. More recently, the economy flatlined in July, with higher taxes for businesses restraining growth.
- The 3m/yy rate of average earnings growth excluding bonuses has fallen from 5.5% to 4.8% in July.
- CPI inflation has ebbed and flowed but finished September at 3.8%, whilst core inflation eased to 3.6%.
- The Bank of England cut interest rates from 4.50% to 4.25% in May, and then to 4% in August.
- The 10-year gilt yield fluctuated between 4.4% and 4.8%, ending the half year at 4.70%.

From a GDP perspective, the financial year got off to a bumpy start with the 0.3% m/m fall in real GDP in April as front-running of US tariffs in Q1 (when GDP grew 0.7% on the quarter) weighed on activity. Despite the underlying reasons for the drop, it was still the first fall since October 2024 and the largest fall since October 2023. However, the economy surprised to the upside in May and June so that quarterly growth ended up 0.3% q/q. Nonetheless, the 0.0% m/m change in real GDP in July will have caused some concern, with the hikes in taxes for businesses that took place in April this year undoubtedly playing a part in restraining growth.

With regard to retail sales, the 0.5% m/m rise in volumes in August was the third such rise in a row and was driven by gains in all the major categories except fuel sales, which fell by 2.0% m/m. Sales may have been supported by the warmer-than-usual weather. If sales were just flat in September, then in Q3 sales volumes would be up 0.7% q/q compared to the 0.2% q/q gain in Q2.

With the November Budget edging nearer, the public finances position looks weak. Public net sector borrowing of £18.0bn in August means that after five months of the financial year, borrowing is already £11.4bn higher than the OBR forecast at the Spring Statement in March. The overshoot in the Chancellor's chosen fiscal mandate of the current budget is even greater with a cumulative deficit of £15.3bn. All this was due to both current receipts in August being lower than the OBR forecast (by £1.8bn) and current expenditure being higher (by £1.0bn). Over the first five months of the financial year, current receipts have fallen short by a total of £6.1bn (partly due to lower-than-expected self-assessment income tax) and current expenditure has overshot by a total of £3.7bn (partly due to social benefits and departmental spending). Furthermore, what very much matters now is the OBR forecasts and their impact on the current budget in 2029/30, which is when the Chancellor's fiscal mandate bites.

A looser labour market is driving softer wage pressures. The 3m/yy rate of average earnings growth excluding bonuses has fallen from 5.5% in April to 4.8% in July. The rate for the private sector slipped from 5.5% to 4.7%, putting it on track to be in line with the Bank of England's Q3 forecast (4.6% for September).

CPI inflation fell slightly from 3.5% in April to 3.4% in May, and services inflation dropped from 5.4% to 4.7%, whilst core inflation also softened from 3.8% to 3.5%. More recently, though, inflation pressures have resurfaced, although the recent upward march in CPI inflation did pause for breath in August, with CPI inflation staying at 3.8%. Core inflation eased once more too, from 3.8% to 3.6%, and services inflation dipped from 5.0% to 4.7%. So, we finish the half year in a similar position to where we started, although with food inflation rising to an 18-month high of 5.1% and households' expectations for inflation standing at a six year high, a further loosening in the labour market and weaker wage growth may be a requisite to UK inflation coming in below 2.0% by 2027.

The FTSE 100 fell sharply following the "Liberation Day" tariff announcement, dropping by more than 10% in the first week of April - from 8,634 on 1 April to 7,702 on 7 April. However, the de-escalation of the trade war coupled with strong corporate earnings led to a rapid rebound starting in late April. As a result, the FTSE 100 closed Q2 at 8,761, around 2% higher than its value at the end of Q1 and more than 7% above its level at the start of 2025. Since then, the FTSE 100 has enjoyed a further 4% rise in July, its strongest monthly gain since January and outperforming the S&P 500. Strong corporate earnings and progress in trade talks (US-EU, UK-India) lifted share prices and the index hit a record 9,321 in mid-August, driven by hopes of peace in Ukraine. September proved more volatile and the FTSE 100 closed Q3 at 9,350, 7% higher than at the end of Q1 and 14% higher since the start of 2025. Future performance will likely be impacted by the extent to which investors' global risk appetite remains intact, Fed rate cuts, resilience in the US economy, and AI optimism. A weaker pound will also boost the index as it inflates overseas earnings.

A summary overview of the future path of Bank Rate

There were four Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meetings in the first half of the financial year. In May, the Committee cut Bank Rate from 4.50% to 4.25%, while in June policy was left unchanged. In June's vote, three MPC members voted for an immediate cut to 4.00%, citing loosening labour market conditions. The other six members were more cautious, as they highlighted the need to monitor for "signs of weak demand", "supply-side constraints" and higher "inflation expectations", mainly from rising food prices. By repeating the well-used phrase "gradual and careful", the MPC continued to suggest that rates would be reduced further.

In August, a further rate cut was implemented. However, a 5-4 split vote for a rate cut to 4% laid bare the different views within the Monetary Policy Committee, with the accompanying commentary noting the decision was "finely balanced" and reiterating that future rate cuts would be undertaken "gradually and carefully". Ultimately, Governor Bailey was the casting vote for a rate cut but with the CPI measure of inflation expected to reach at least 4% later this year, the MPC will be wary of making any further rate cuts until inflation begins its slow downwards trajectory back towards 2%.

Borrowing

The Authority's capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2025/26 is £487m. The CFR denotes the Authority's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the Authority may borrow from the PWLB or the market (external borrowing), or from internal balances on a temporary basis (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions.

It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the "Affordable Borrowing Limits". The Council's approved Treasury and Prudential Indicators (affordability limits) are included in the approved Treasury Management Strategy. A list of the approved limits is shown in Appendix B. The Prudential Indicators were not breached during the first half of 2025/26 and have not been previously breached. The schedule at Appendix C details the Prudential Borrowing approved and utilised to date.

No new external borrowing has currently been undertaken to date in 2025/26.

The Council had not undertaken any new borrowing for a number of years until 2024/25, and has been utilising cash balances to internally "borrow" for prudential borrowing schemes. This has enabled the Council to benefit from increased interest costs compared to the returns that could be generated on the cash balances. This approach has been effective during a period where the Council has held significant cash balances.

Cash balances have now reduced as a result of reduced levels of reserves being held and loans continuing to reach their maturity dates. Therefore, it has been necessary over the last 18 months to secure additional borrowing to reduce the under-borrowed position.

Gilt yields and PWLB certainty rates have remained relatively volatile throughout the six months under review, but the general trend has been for medium and longer dated parts of the curve to shift higher whilst the 5-year part of the curve finished September close to where it began in April.

The table below shows the high/low/average PWLB rates for the first six months of the financial year.

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
01/04/2025	4.82%	4.94%	5.38%	5.95%	5.63%
30/09/2025	4.58%	4.95%	5.53%	6.23%	5.98%
Low	4.36%	4.62%	5.17%	5.78%	5.46%
Low date	04/08/2025	02/05/2025	02/05/2025	04/04/2025	04/04/2025
High	4.84%	4.99%	5.62%	6.41%	6.14%
High date	02/04/2025	21/05/2025	03/09/2025	03/09/2025	03/09/2025
Average	4.55%	4.82%	5.40%	6.11%	5.83%
Spread	0.48%	0.37%	0.45%	0.63%	0.68%

Debt Rescheduling

Debt repayment and rescheduling opportunities have increased over the course of the past six months and will be considered if giving rise to long-term savings. However, no debt repayments or rescheduling have been undertaken to date in the current financial year.



Council

Item

11 December 2025

Public

Appointment of Interim Chief Executive, Returning Officer & Electoral Registration Officer

Responsible Officer:	Tim Collard		
email:	Tim.collard@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 252756
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Heather Kidd		

1. Synopsis

This report deals with the appointment of officers to the statutory roles of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Council is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint one of its officers to the role of Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive).
- 2.2. The Council is required by the Representation of the People Act 1983 to appoint officers to the roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer. The Act provides also that the Council may appoint a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Tanya Miles be appointed as Interim Chief Executive in accordance with section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- 3.2. That Tanya Miles (Interim Chief Executive) be appointed as Returning Officer in accordance with section 35(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with immediate effect.

- 3.3. That Tanya Miles (Interim Chief Executive) be appointed as the Electoral Registration Officer in accordance with section 8(2)(a) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with immediate effect
- 3.4. That Tim Collard (Service Director – Legal, Governance and Planning (Monitoring Officer)) be appointed as the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer in accordance with section 52(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with immediate effect

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. The recommendations enable Shropshire Council to comply with the requirements for the appointment of statutorily required officers.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no additional costs associated with these appointments.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. There are no climate change implications from this report

7. Background

- 7.1. The Council is required to appoint a Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) in accordance with Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Tanya Miles initially agreed to the appointment with the Leader of the Council and Council is now asked to formally agree that Tanya Miles is appointed as Interim Chief Executive. Recruitment to the permanent position will commence in the new year.
- 7.2. The Council is required to appoint a Returning Officer in accordance with Section 35(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 to administer local elections. Elections are conducted by the Returning Officer who has a personal responsibility in law independent and separate from their duties as an employee of the Council. To ensure electoral procedures are not jeopardised in the event of the absence of the Returning Officer the Returning Officer can appoint one or more deputies. Council is asked to agree that Tanya Miles is appointed as Returning Officer.
- 7.2 The Council is required to appoint an Electoral Registration Officer in accordance with Section 8(2)(a) of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The Electoral Registration Officer is the person with statutory responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the register of electors. Council is asked to agree that Tanya Miles is appointed as Electoral Registration Officer. For parliamentary elections the Electoral Registration Officer is designated to be the Acting Returning Officer, the Returning Officer being the Sheriff of the county. If the Council does not appoint

an Electoral Registration Officer, should a parliamentary election or by-election be called, the Chief Executive would assume the role of Acting Returning Officer

- 7.3 Section 52 (2) & (3) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 Act allows for discharge of the Electoral Registration Officer duties by any Deputy approved by the Council who appointed the Electoral Registration Officer. Council is asked to agree that Tim Collard is appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Representation of the People Act 1983

Local Member: N/A

Appendices

None

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 2, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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